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THE PERSONALITY OF NAPOLEON

THE PERSONALITY OF NAPOLEON

By

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"'Tis your thoughts that now must deck our kings,
Carry them here and there, jumping o'er times,
Turning th' accomplishment of many years
Into an hour glass."

SHAKESPEARE, *King Henry V*, Act I, Chorus

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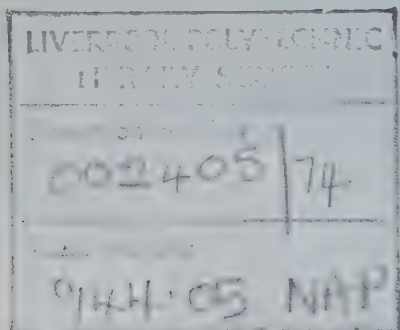
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“Les hommes la plupart sont étrangement faits!
Dans la juste nature on ne les voit jamais;
La raison a pour eux des bornes trop petites;
En chaque caractère ils passent ses limites;
Et la plus noble chose, ils la gâtent souvent
Pour la vouloir outrer et pousser trop avant.”

MOLIÈRE, *Le Tartuffe*, Act I, Sc. 5.



THE PERSONALITY OF NAPOLEON

LECTURE I

THE MAN

“ I confess, I have no notion of a truly great man that could not be all sorts of men.”—CARLYLE, *Heroes*.

I N these lectures I propose briefly to estimate the value of the personal factor in the Napoleonic era. In no sense do they claim to be an exhaustive analysis of character. The materials for such an examination probably do not exist; for, though the number of the extant letters of Napoleon exceeds 32,000, yet by far the larger number deal solely with facts; and even the imposing mass of the official “Correspondance de Napoléon” (with additions by Lecestre and Brotonne) does not explain the variations and contradictions which invest his being with a charm sometimes almost Shakespearian in its elusiveness. Even at St. Helena, when he claimed that misfortune showed him to the world naked as he was, the aureole of legend was beginning to gild his brows. The truest estimate, then, will be that

which duly assesses the influences moulding his early years, and traces the manifold activities, which, while shaping the fortunes of France and Europe, also helped to fashion his being. Restful natures can be examined microscopically. On Napoleon the analyst would exhaust his powers as vainly as a painter who, from a stuffed specimen in a glass case, should seek to depict the flight of the eagle.

Even in the case of a king of men the habitat counts for much; and, in part at least, Napoleon owed his soaring strenuous nature to his native land, Corsica. There Nature bestows her boons full shrewdly, withholding so much as to spur men to some form of activity, and so far rewarding their efforts as to yield a sufficiency, with something of that leisure super-added which makes life a delight, not a drudgery. On the shores of the Mediterranean mankind first lived a complete life, in some parts developing the arts and sciences, in others sinking into luxury and sloth, or in the more rugged lands keeping up the primæval habits of war and adventure thinly covered by a veneer of culture.

These last were the conditions that obtained in Corsica. It is to Italy what Ithaca is to Greece, echoing faintly the rapturous music of the mainland, but adding the warlike or wailing undertone of the Highlander. The unrest of the sea, the awesomeness of the mountains, are balanced by no glad and careless life in fertile plains. The crag, the forest, the sea dominate Corsica. Like Ithaca, she is "rugged, a good nurse of heroes." The wonder is that she has so rarely fulfilled

the prophecy of Rousseau, that she would some day astonish the world. For her sons have been hardened by constant strife and energised by frequent admixtures of conquering races. All the peoples that swept over the Mediterranean, from the times of the Phoenicians and Greeks down to those of the Vandals and Arabs, have left their mark upon the islanders. Probably the stem is in the main Italian; but the many grafts have made of it a tougher tree, less fertile in fruit and more so in thorns. How should it be otherwise? A small people, exposed on all sides to raids, must think first of defence, or, if that fails, of flight to the forest and mountain, trusting by prowess or guile to worst or tire out the invaders. To the Corsicans the sea was perhaps more an enemy than a friend. If it yielded fish and helped on the petty traders, it also brought the Barbary rovers, who, if successful, swept off fishermen, traders, and their families into slavery. We are apt to forget that less than a century has elapsed since Lord Exmouth burnt out Algiers, that wasps' nest of the Mediterranean. But the records of Corsica and her many martello towers (so called from the hammer struck on a bell to warn the country at the approach of pirates) remind us of that dark shadow hanging over her life and that of all Mediterranean peoples.

In such a state of things self-defence is always the first thought. Every Corsican of standing went about armed. Many of them wore the trophies of the chase; and, in default of lawful game, would turn their arms against neighbours with whom they were at feud

What the joust or tourney was to the barons of the mainland, that the blood-feud, or vendetta, was to the *caporali*, or chieftains, of Corsica. An injury, an insult, even a haughty look, might provoke a feud which could be ended only with blood. The islanders recked little of public law. For generations they had known nothing but the decrees of Genoa; and them they loathed as the behests of their would be tyrants. Boswell, in his interesting "Account of Corsica," ascribes the habit of private vengeance solely to this cause, and says that the Corsican champion, Paoli, succeeded in stamping out the vicious custom. Both assertions are exaggerated. The vendetta was far older than Genoese rule in Corsica, and it has survived to some extent to our own days. Boswell is far nearer the truth when he ascribes the vendetta to the violent passions of the islanders, resulting from the heat of the climate, "which forms the human frame to an exquisite degree of sensibility. . . . They are people of strong passions as well as of lively and vigorous minds. These are the materials of which men are to be formed, either good or bad, in a superior degree."¹ The influence of the vendetta on the character of the islanders was profound. It made them a silent, suspicious, proud, and vindictive race. In the virtual absence of national law, the honour of the clan and the family was always the first consideration. War, the chase, and the ad-

¹ J. Boswell, "Account of Corsica" (1769), 160, 161, 241. So, too, Napoleon ("Corresp.," ii, 163), said that the imagination and the passions of the Corsicans were very lively, and that they were extremely difficult to understand.

vancement or preservation of the kin were the governing factors in life.

The Corsicans displayed the virtues as well as the defects of the clan system. If they were factious and difficult to rule, they clung steadfastly to their chieftain. To desert him was the depth of dishonour. On one occasion a youth ventured to do so. His father, meeting him at the gate of the town, shot him dead; and public opinion approved the deed. To die for the chief was a glorious act, and this chivalrous feeling nerved the islanders to deeds of endurance and daring astonishing to more civilized peoples. They had no regular troops; for as Paoli said to Boswell, "We should then have the bravery of this and that regiment. At present, every single man is a regiment himself. Should the Corsicans be formed into regular troops, we should lose that personal bravery which has produced such actions among us."¹ On the other hand their moods were as fickle as their sea, and savage as their mountains. No one has ever succeeded in thoroughly taming the people of the interior. The Genoese failed, as the French after them failed.

Into this primitive community Napoleon Bonaparte was born at Ajaccio, on 15th August 1769. It was a time of exceptional strain and stress. The islanders were struggling to throw off the yoke of the French, who had taken over Corsica from the nerveless hands of the Genoese. The first associations of the child were therefore those of hatred against the people whom he afterwards raised to heights of glory;

¹ Boswell, p. 320.

and up to his twentieth year he was at heart a rebel against the French connection. Thus, in that formative period all the faculties that make for opposition received abnormal development. His whole life was to be a struggle. In truth, the struggle began before his birth. His father and mother had to flee from their home during the strife against the French; and Napoleon himself, when, as ruler of France, he set himself against effeminacy, once declared with his usual energy, "Before my birth, my mother was running about over all the mountains of Corsica." Perhaps the hardships of those months made him the slim youth, whose aquiline sharpness of face and figure aroused wonder and pity. But his constitution was sound; his nerves were of steel; and that resolute will hardened under the ceaseless pressure of danger. The life of a man, as of a nation, is the stronger for encountering privation in the early days. The Spaniards in their age-long contests with the Moors, the Scots in the fight with Nature and with England, gained the grit which spread them over the world as conquerors and leaders. Modern Italy was made by her virile sons of the north; and Napoleon would not have gone so far had he not early been inured to war and hardship. Italy supplied his brain power; Corsica made him a warrior.

To speculate on the family ingredients that go to make up the character of a child is a fallacious task. Even the ordinary product of a one-room family sometimes sets at defiance the laws of heredity; and

he who should seek to reconstruct a great genius on biological principles would assuredly bring forth only a dummy. No: the World Spirit now and again visits the earth, and in the being of some child enfolds influences of wonder-working potency. In other years that same cradle may hold a doll, a mere libertine. On this occasion, in August 1769, it enshrines Napoleon; for some incalculable influence has raised to the n'th power all the family characteristics that make for greatness.

Nevertheless, Napoleon is a Corsican, an Italian.¹ In his character, abounding in strongly marked features, the nature of his father, a restless, intriguing man, fond of literature and philosophy, appears on what may be termed the civil side of his faculties. Charles Marie de Bonaparte, though he fought under Paoli's banner, was not fitted to be a soldier. He was essentially a schemer; but he lacked the toughness and persistent energy which might have carried some of his many schemes to a successful issue; and he finally went over to the French side in an eminently un-Corsican manner, which earned the contempt of Napoleon. Still, Charles was a clever man, with varied tastes and a veneer of academic culture which sufficed for the municipal and legal honours at which he aimed. He was an attorney, and in pursuit of places and profits at Ajaccio showed untiring zeal and considerable powers of intrigue. These, added to the influence of his family, and that of his wife,

¹ See the family pedigree in Masson, "Napoléon inconnu," i, *ad init.*

brought him to the front; and he might have prospered but for restlessness and constant wire-pulling. Finally his requests for patronage seem to have disgusted the French officials and tired out his friends, with the result that he finished his days in failure. He began life poor, and he ended it virtually a bankrupt. At the time of his marriage with Letizia Ramolino, a girl of fifteen, the young couple had between them property amounting to less than 14,000 francs in value. Their children came fast, and for each child he wove new schemes and intrigues, most of which overshot the mark, the result being that his income rarely met his needs.

These ceaseless embarrassments, which would have broken down most women, only called forth the wifely devotion and resolute thrift of Letizia. She came of a hardy stock, which like the Bonapartes had won distinction in mediaeval Italy, but had migrated from Genoa to Corsica at the end of the fifteenth century. There the Ramolini had intermarried with other families of Italian origin for the most part, though in Letizia there was a slight strain of Greek blood.¹ Her mother was of the Pietra-Santa family, which sprang from the warlike clans of the interior; and Letizia herself developed a firm, proud, masculine character, destined to have a great influence on that of Napoleon. In him the restless scheming disposition of the father was partly, not wholly, balanced by the hard, matter-

¹ There seems to be no truth in Madame Junot's story that the ancestor of Bonaparte, who came from Tuscany, was a Greek named Καλομέρος. Duchesse d'Abrantès, "Méms.," i, ch. 2.

of-fact nature of the mother. She brought up her children frugally, as there was need, tenderly, as her hearted prompted, but with the Spartan severity which their headstrong character demanded. They loved her none the less, and respected her all the more, because she did not spare the rod. Apparently the only time when Napoleon received bodily chastisement was in his seventeenth year, when he was guilty of mimicking the limping gait of his grandmother. The quick eye of Letizia detected the offence; and in due course the young lieutenant had to submit to a sound birching. The tactical skill of Letizia on this occasion equalled her firmness of mind and of arm. She notified to him that he should go upstairs to dress for some social function, and then with the cane pounced upon him while disrobed. In the shrewdness of the mother on this occasion may we not see a homely forecast of the manœuvres at Castiglione and Austerlitz?

All the children of this quick-eyed, strong-minded woman displayed average ability. Joseph, the eldest surviving child, became a skilful diplomatist, and might have figured as a fairly competent ruler in ordinary times. Lucien and Elisa showed intellectual ability and administrative capacity. Louis was clever but crabbed. Pauline lived a butterfly life with easy Italian grace; and the youngest children, Caroline and Jerome, almost rivalled her in the number of their amours. Self-will, obstinacy, voluptuousness, figure in all the children; ability in the first four; genius only in Napoleon.

He resembled the Corsicans in his short stature (he stood about 5 ft. 5 in.¹) in the hardness of his nature, which scorned danger and despised wealth, above all in his family-pride, which later on raised his mother to the position of first lady in France and his brothers to the thrones of neighbouring lands. He himself once described the Corsicans as "harsh, but at bottom just"; and again in those words he described himself. Benefits he ever remembered and generously rewarded. He had a keen eye for wrongs or slights, and generally meted out revenge; but he raised his old friends, for instance Junot, to a position far above their deserts; and many of his difficulties late in life arose from having placed his brothers and old comrades in stations which demanded real capacity. This was a defect in a great ruler, but one for which he is to be honoured as a man. He often behaved to humbler dependents with the *hauteur* of a chief; but he knew the infinite worth of fidelity and rewarded those who showed it. Specially noteworthy is his treatment of the son of Nicola Frate, who had bravely defended him during the civil strifes of Corsica in the spring of 1793. At that time the future world-conqueror was fain to flee from Ajaccio on foot in order to escape the violence of the opposing and triumphant Paolists. Nicola Frate guided him on foot by secret paths and helped him to escape from a position of extreme peril. Napoleon ever remembered this, and

¹ Bausset, "Cour de Napoléon," ch. 39. The height has also been given as 5 ft. 7 in.; but Bausset, Napoleon's chamberlain, is the most credible authority.

in his will left 10,000 francs to the son of his faithful guide.

The same document contains a curious proof of his rancour. He bequeathed 10,000 francs to a French officer, Cantillon, who had sought to murder Wellington. The generosity and the rancour are both of them Corsican traits, strongly marked in his character. Time after time he astonished the world by the splendour of his gifts and the terror of his vengeance. At the time of his execution of the Duc d'Enghien an aide-de-camp ventured on the true but risky comment, that the First Consul was returning to the customs of his native isle. Five years later the Spanish Bourbons were to feel the fatal sword-thrust which their challenge to him during the Jena campaign had seemed to court. Skilled in hiding his resentment, he bided his time, and in 1808 overwhelmed that dynasty in apparently irretrievable ruin. It is highly probable that he all along intended to avenge the affront;¹ and the means of executing it were characteristic of the man and of his race. The self-suppression, the secret waiting, the intrigues to divide the House of Bourbon, and then the final feline spring, are like an episode of Florentine history. The French nature is more open, sunny, and careless, which goes far to explain the almost invariable failure of their conspiracies. Certainly the survivors of the French Revolution, a sad, weary, disillusionized group, were mere schoolboys in the hand of this silent, determined, resourceful Italian.

¹ Metternich, "Mems." (Eng. edit.), ii, 291.

More than once, with the frankness which is his most engaging feature, he expressed his contempt of the French, especially of the Parisians. To Metternich in the spring of 1812 he uttered these surprising words: "In France talent is common enough; but it is only talent; there is nothing beneath it which resembles character, and, still less, principle. Everyone runs after applause, whether it comes from above or below, no matter: they want to be noticed and applauded."¹ So, too, at St. Helena, he remarked to General Gourgaud: "In France there will never be a lack of clever scheming people; but there will always be a lack of men of great character and vigour, in fine, of men dowered with the sacred fire."²

I believe that he ascribed those supreme gifts only to the ancient Romans. For them he had a profound admiration. Though Alexander the Great winged his fancies eastwards, the first two Caesars were his models in war and politics. From Julius Caesar he first learnt the lesson that decisive triumphs in war are the fruit of singleness of aim and concentration both of purpose and of forces. From Caesar Augustus he borrowed largely in statecraft, but his debt to Julius is greater. The close connection between the brilliant conquest of Gaul and the foundation of autocracy at Rome evidently inspired Bonaparte's far-reaching plans of the years 1797-9; and the clemency of the great Roman may have strengthened the resolve of the First Consul to rally all parties to

¹ Metternich, "Mems." (Eng. edit.), i, 151.

² Gourgaud, "Journal," i, 299.

the cause of political moderation which he made emphatically his own. In all this, and in the carrying out of great public works, Napoleon figured as a second Julius Caesar. Strange destiny of mankind, that the political powers of a whole people, dormant during nearly eighteen centuries of fallow, should now rise up in an island-scion of the race.

The four-square self-sufficiency characteristic of the old Roman nature appears early in the nature of Napoleon Bonaparte. His mental training was that which he himself absorbed, not what others sought to instil. He had a poor opinion of the education given him by the monks at Brienne, and by the authorities at the *École Militaire* at Paris; but probably he would have disliked any French school. At that time, and up to 1790, his feelings were strongly Corsican. He hated the French, as the conquerors of his country; and at the Paris seminary he scorned the sons of nobles who formed a large part of the pupils. Further, he longed to free Corsica from the French; and this explains the arduous studies in History and in the art of war, which he undertook during his time in garrison at Valence and Auxonne during the greater part of the years 1787-90. Very remarkable is the concentration of thought and effort which enabled this poor lieutenant to amass a most unusual amount of information on Modern History and some of the sciences. Like most careful and persevering students, he made his own summaries, thereby working the material into the fibre of his own brain; and the note-books which

have survived reveal that methodizing faculty, that resolve to arrange and master facts, which is one of the secrets of success in organization. His was no ordinary brain, content with languidly surveying the facts of life at a distance, or sated, perhaps, with the instruction imparted by others. He was more or less a rebel at school; but, when his mind had once awakened, it became a powerful machine, grinding all the materials that came within reach, appropriating them and sorting them in compartments ready for the time of use. All this was done before or after the work of drill, and amidst conditions of health and poverty far from favourable to prolonged study. Yet the written results of those studies of about two years are portentous. They extend to 368 large pages of print in M. Masson's work, "Napoléon inconnu." That is, they would make an average-sized book of these days.

The quality and variety of the work is as remarkable as its extent. Bonaparte draws up a new constitution for a regimental club (*la Calotte*), which may be called his first administrative effort. He writes four long memoranda on artillery. Turning to the Classics, he summarizes the first part of *The Republic* of Plato, and writes notes on the government of the ancient Persians, of Sparta and Athens, and on the geography of ancient Greece. He also epitomizes Greek and Egyptian history. Carthage and Assyria attract him. Raynal's book on the two Indies first turns his thoughts to the colonial and imperial questions which are to dominate his policy during

the Empire; and perhaps it is the collision of England and France in that sphere which leads him on to a surprisingly careful study of English history down to the year 1688.

He goes even farther afield. He studies the history of the Arabs and the government of Venice, doubtless because of their influence on the Levant. To the history of France he pays less attention, either because he has been well drilled in it at school, or from lack of special interest. On the other hand, Natural Science, in the domains of Geography and Biology, holds a prominent place in his thoughts, which play inquisitively around the mysterious phenomena of generation. Altogether what a programme of self-culture is in these notes.

Side by side with this resolve to master the facts of life are signs of an introspective brooding which develops into melancholy, witness this extract from a monologue on suicide which he wrote probably in May 1786, while second lieutenant at Valence (æt. 17):

Always alone even in the midst of men, I come back to my room to dream with myself, and to surrender myself to all the vivacity of my melancholy. In which direction does it tend to-day? Towards death. Being in the dawn of my days, I can still hope to live a long time. I have been away from my country for about six or seven years. What pleasures will be mine, when in four months' time I once again see my countrymen and my relatives! From the tender sensations with which the recollections of the pleasures of my childhood now fill me, may I not infer that my happiness will be complete? What madness, then, leads me to wish for death? Doubtless the thought—"What is there to

do in this world?" Since I must die, is it not just as well that I should kill myself? If I had already passed my 60th year, I should respect the prejudices of my contemporaries, and wait patiently until nature had finished with me; but, since I begin to experience misfortune, and since nothing is a pleasure to me, why should I support a life, in which nothing turns out well for me? How far men are removed from nature! How cowardly they are, how abject, how servile! What spectacle shall I behold in my country? My compatriots loaded with chains, while they tremblingly kiss the hand that oppresses them. They are no longer Corsicans whom a hero animated by his virtues,—enemies to tyrants, luxury and vile courtiers. . . .¹

The rest of the effusion is in the same passionate, almost idyllic strain. We feel in it the pulsations of a proud and sensitive nature, with here and there a syncopated note of egotism. His sense of duty to Corsica is not the dominant thought. To him life is not, as it was to Mazzini, a mission, but a career; and because he finds the Corsicans of his time unequal to those of the great days of Paoli, he thinks of ending his tedious existence. We know not what were the misfortunes, other than poverty, which then beset him. Perhaps the impossibility of doing much fretted his restless spirit; or the failure of some scheme for arousing the Corsicans against the French may have bred disgust of life. What turned the current of his thoughts outwards and upwards is matter for conjecture; but, as at St. Helena, he refused to commit suicide, declaring it to be the act of a coward.²

¹ Masson, i, 145.

² "Nap. Corresp.," xxxi, 485.

Was it the deep fund of constancy or Bonaparte's nature that repelled the unmanly thought; or was it the incoming of a sweet spring idyll into his life? In those months spent at Valence he fell in love with Mlle. Colombier, the daughter of his hostess. At St. Helena he said to Las Cases: "We could not have behaved more innocently. We arranged little meetings. I still remember one in the middle of summer at daybreak. You will scarcely believe it; but all our happiness consisted in eating cherries together."¹ We can picture the youth of seventeen, with olive cheeks wan with study, feasting his eyes on the face of the Provençal maiden, lit up by the all-pervading glow of sunrise. I wonder that no artist has depicted the scene. Doubtless those were among the happiest moments of his life. How could he think of suicide while this nymph of the cherry-trees was near? But she soon passed out of his life, which she might have kept joyous and pure.²

We are apt to think of Napoleon as hard, stern, inflexible; and undoubtedly he became so in later years. It will be my aim in these lectures to try to explain this transformation. For the present, notice that in youth his being was rich in emotion; and, had he developed on normal lines in an age happier than that of the French Revolution, his nature might have become finely balanced. Vigour in action would have accompanied sensitiveness to higher impressions; firm to control others, he would have

¹ Las Cases, "Mémorial," i, 167 (27th to 31st August, 1815).

² Later on she became lady in waiting to Napoleon's mother.

led them on to the brighter future which then began to dawn. Nature seemed to fit him at nearly all points for a career rich both in glory and beneficence. He was of those who saw visions; and possibly he might have brought them near to accomplishment, if all had gone well.

But all did not go well, either with Corsica, or with France, or with him. Disappointments fell thick upon him after the proclamation of the French Republic in September 1792. His career as Jacobin will concern us in the next lecture. Therefore I need only mention here the first mental shocks that befel him. After battling hard for French democracy in Corsica during nine months (September 1792-June 1793), he was obliged to flee from the island. Taking refuge in Provence with his family, he was finally treated no better by the Thermidorian party which seized on power at Paris in July 1794. On a frivolous charge they flung him into prison; and, not long after his release, he was suddenly ordered to take an infantry command in the Vendéan campaign waged against the royalist peasants. He refused to take up this task; and a sign of his mental unrest in the late summer of 1795 was his desire to go to Constantinople to reorganize the artillery of the Sultan. By this time, then, he is at heart a free-lance. At twenty-six years of age he is that pathetic personage, a disillusionized enthusiast.

Of the emotions formerly so rich in his nature, there is only one which has not found full expression. Love has not yet laid hold of him. Already he

has sullied this side of his nature—so we may judge from his own description of his first connection with a courtesan in the Palais Royal, at Paris, in 1787. The narrative is very life-like; and this characteristic tells against the attempt that has been made to explain it away as a mere exercise in composition, in no way derogatory to “the principles of virtuous conduct which he both taught and practised at this period.” Would a young man of virtuous conduct choose such a theme in order to improve his style?

Another episode, of the year 1794, is far worse. While in command of the artillery of the French army operating in the Maritime Alps, a passing passion for Mme. Thurreau, the wife of one of the representatives on mission to that army, led him to adopt the following device in order to please her. I give the incident in his own words: “Taking her out for a walk one day in the midst of our positions near the Col di Tenda, the idea suddenly came to me to give her a sight of a little engagement; and I ordered the outposts to attack. We were victors, it is true, but obviously it could lead to no result. The attack was purely my fancy, and yet some men remained stretched out on the ground. Therefore, later on, every time that the memory of it has occurred to me, I have strongly reproached myself for it.”¹

From sensuous habits he might have been saved by a pure and enduring passion. Here Fortune failed him. Not until his twenty-sixth year did he fall in

¹ Las Cases, “Mémorial,” i, 202.

love. His captor was Mme. de Beauharnais, a beautiful Creole, more than six years his senior, whose intellectual gifts by no means equalled her external charms. Men of strongly marked character are often captivated by their mental and physical opposites. This was so with Bonaparte. Her languorous charms called forth his ecstasies. During the Italian campaign of 1796 his letters to her reveal the intensity of his passion. These extracts must suffice:

Port Maurice, April 3 (1796).

My unique Joséphine, away from thee there is no more joy: away from thee the world is a wilderness in which I stand alone, and without experiencing the bliss of unburdening my soul. You have robbed me of more than my soul; you are the one only thought of my life. When I am weary of the worries of my profession, when I mistrust the issue, when men disgust me, when I am ready to curse my life, I put my hand on my heart where your portrait beats in unison. I look at it, and love is for me complete happiness; and everything laughs for joy, except the time during which I find myself absent from my beloved. . . . Ah! my winsome wife, I know not what fate awaits me; but if it keeps me much longer from you, it will be unbearable; my strength will not last out. There was a time in which I prided myself on my strength; and sometimes, when casting my eyes on the ills which men might do me, on the fate which destiny might have in store for me, I have gazed steadfastly on the most incredible misfortunes without a wrinkle on my brow or a vestige of surprise; but to-day the thought that my Joséphine might be ill; and above all, the cruel, fatal thought that she might love me less, blights my soul, stops my blood, makes me wretched and dejected,

without even leaving me the courage of fury and despair. I often used to say that men have no power over him who dies without regrets; but to-day to die without your love, to die in uncertainty of that, is the torment of hell; it is a life-like and terrifying figure of absolute annihilation. I feel passion strangling me.

Joséphine, on the contrary, showed the shallowness and frivolity of her nature by almost forgetting the hero amidst the distractions of Paris. Her letters were few and cold. At Tortona he writes, on 17th June 1796, in acute concern at her silence: "I have always been fortunate; never has my destiny resisted my will; and to-day I am hurt in what touches me in a unique degree. Joséphine, how can you remain so long without writing to me? Your last laconic letter is dated May 22. Moreover it is a distressing one for me; but I always keep it in my pocket; your portrait and letters are perpetually before my eyes." Again, at Verona he writes (17th September 1796): "I write very often and you seldom. You are naughty and undutiful; very undutiful, as well as thoughtless. It is disloyal to deceive a poor husband, an affectionate lover. So, too, a month later, at Modena: "Your letters are as cold as if you were fifty. We might have been married fifteen years. One finds in them the friendship and feelings of that winter of life. Fie! Joséphine! It is very naughty, very unkind, very undutiful of you. What more can you do to make me indeed an object of compassion? Love me no longer? Eh; that is already accomplished! Hate me? Well, I prefer that! Everything grows stale, except ill-will;

but indifference, with its marble pulse, its rigid stare, its monotonous demeanour! . . . A thousand, thousand very heartfelt kisses."

And yet, at St. Helena in his forty-eighth year, he declared to Gourgaud: "At fifty one can no longer love. Berthier was always in love; but my heart is bronzed over. I have never been thoroughly in love, except perhaps with Joséphine a little, and, again, because I was twenty-seven years old when I knew her. I felt much friendliness towards Marie Louise."¹ This utterance is very remarkable. Mountain torrents foam and boil in time of storm, drying up as quickly in drought; but I doubt whether there is any other instance of a man who had loved as Bonaparte once loved Joséphine, afterwards denying that it was anything more than a passing incident of youth. True, his heart was "bronzed" by war and failure. But the memory of that bliss ought to have survived, despite the flightiness and shallowness of Joséphine. Was there not something in Napoleon's nature, as in that of many men of action, which encircled him in the present? While he adores Joséphine he is a different being from the morbidly self-centred youth of the months spent in Paris. In Italy, amidst the fond yearnings of unsated love, he is at the height of his mental powers. The gradual clouding over of that vision darkens his outlook on life. His tenderer feelings are blighted, and when he hears of her misconduct during his absence in Egypt, his heart is seared, so that, twenty years later, even before "the winter of life" has come

¹ Gourgaud, "Journal," ii, 8.

he doubts whether he ever knew the full force of love. What a mental tragedy, comparable almost with the political cataclysm! Perhaps his failure to meet with a worthy consort was partly accountable for that downfall. A woman, both loving and strong, would have guided him aright at several crises in his career, toning down his anger, softening his resentments, and surrounding him with the invincible rampart of a nation's devotion. Joséphine sometimes tried to effect this; but she early lost the power over him which she ought to have wielded to the end.

Even in Italy his conduct was irregular, and at St. Helena he admitted having had seven mistresses. Only in the case of the Polish Countess Walewska did they inspire in him any real affection; and the way in which he afterwards talked about them was coarse and brutal. At St. Helena his conversations were sometimes of a low moral tone. He declared in favour of polygamy and concubinage, adding to this the natural conclusion, that woman ought to be subject to man. In the West women were treated too much as equals: the eastern peoples put them in their right position as inferiors.¹ On the whole there is much of reason in the conclusion reached by Emerson and John Codman Ropes, that Napoleon was not a gentleman.²

Pleas in extenuation may, however, be urged.

¹ Las Cases, "Mémorial," iv, 137-139; Gourgaud, "Journal," i, 81, 211; ii, 53, 305, 390.

² Emerson, "Representative Men (Napoleon)"; "Memorial of J. C. Ropes," p. 18.

Italians and Corsicans believed in the inferiority of woman. The men smoked, grumbled, or plotted, while the women figured as dolls or drudges, generally the latter. Boswell during his tour in Corsica was amused to hear the men shout out "Le donne," "le donne," to come and carry his baggage when he was about to set out.¹ In France it was not much better, until the Revolution. Then, indeed, women began to assert their rights; but their conduct displayed far more vehemence than wisdom. Mme. de Staël, Mme. Roland, Charlotte Corday, are interesting and pathetic figures; but their enthusiasm on the whole did more harm than good. Women also made no effective protest against the scandalous facilities for divorce which crept in under the cloak of Liberty; and Napoleon, incisively commenting on the conduct of their sex during the Revolution, had some excuse for saying that in the interests of order they had to be repressed and put back in the old ruts. The history of the feminist movement at that time needs to be studied; for its follies entailed a grievous set-back to the cause of social progress.² Napoleon came to the front at the time when women themselves had provoked a reaction in favour of the old Roman ideas. He became the champion of that reaction; and we can partly sympathize with his incisive declaration: "Women shall have no influence at my Court. They may dislike me;

¹ J. Boswell, "An Account of Corsica," p. 301.

² See articles by Professor Aulard, in the "Revue bleue" (16th March 1898), and Lady Grant Duff, in the "Nineteenth Century and After" (May 1912).

but I on my side shall have peace and quietness." The most singular thing remains to be noted. This high-handed treatment completely succeeded, except in the case of a few feminine stalwarts; and then, as now, women often ranged themselves among his blind devotees.

To resume, then, we find that the events of the years 1793-9 blighted the hopes and aspirations of a nature which was singularly full of promise. First Corsica, then the French Revolution, then Joséphine disappointed him. Think what that implies. Native land, political creed, wife, were not what they should have been. In most men the disillusionment would have dulled every feeling and paralysed action at its source, the will. It enhances our sense of the majesty of Napoleon's powers, that, nevertheless, he concentrated them the more upon the world around him, and became the greatest man of action since Julius Caesar. And that is not all. Amidst the distractions of his many-sided career he figured as one of the best of sons, one of the kindest of brothers.

He treated Letizia Bonaparte with great affection. He called her "a worthy woman," and at every rise in the early part of his career he sent her money in order to maintain her and the family in comfort. On becoming First Consul, he awarded to her the title Madame Mère and bade her keep up becoming state. Here they differed. The "worthy woman" could never bring herself to believe that the splendour of the Consulate and Empire would be lasting. She did her best to save money; and many were the tales of her

parsimony in respect to candles and butter. To the remonstrances of Napoleon Letizia would quaintly reply: "If ever all of you fall on my hands again, you will thank me for what I am now doing." The words reveal a canny nature which Napoleon could not understand. Nevertheless, she was right. Her old-world thrift served to help the family long after his death. Despite their differences respecting candles and butter, she retained her hold over him. Whenever he cheated at cards, she alone dared to remonstrate. On such occasions she called out: "Napoléon, vous vous trompez."¹ It would be interesting to know whether he revoked.

His behaviour towards his brothers and sisters is a voluminous topic, varying with the moods and whims of an essentially southern race. One thing is certain, that dullness dwelt not in the Bonaparte household. On the eight children nature had bestowed lively imaginations, fervid longings for power, voluptuous desires, and tart tongues. The sudden rise of such a family from poverty to splendour owing to the genius of the second brother supplies all the elements of almost farcical comedy; and the world has never ceased to laugh or weep at their plots, their quarrels, their amours, their treacheries. On the whole, Joseph, Napoleon, and Louis come out the best from this *School for Scandal*. If the powerful brother rated the others harshly, they generally deserved it. They owed everything to him; yet, with the exception of Joseph

¹ S. Girardin, "Journal," ii, 327; Peyrusse, "Mémorial," p. 239.

and Louis, they often behaved most ungratefully.¹ The youngest, Caroline and Jerome, were to some extent responsible for the collapse of his power in Italy and Germany; and the others, except Pauline, took pleasure in thwarting his will at important crises. Joseph was a kindly man, quite unequal to the position to which he was raised at Madrid. In fact, Napoleon sought to make all his brothers eagles; but they remained ordinary fowl, intent on strutting and crowing before their harems. His irritation at their incompetence told fatally both on his domestic relations and foreign policy. The family and the imperial ideals constantly clashed; so that, adapting Macaulay's dictum about Charles I, we may say that Napoleon would have been a better ruler if he had been a worse brother. In 1810 he exclaimed bitterly to Metternich: "My relatives have done me more harm than I have done them good; and if I had to begin again, my brothers and sisters should have nothing more than a palace in Paris and a few million (francs) to spend in idleness. The fine arts and charity should be their domains, and not kingdoms, which some do not know how to guide, while others compromise me by carrying their imitation to the point of parody."²

To his sisters Napoleon also accorded most generous treatment, which both Elisa and Caroline finally recompensed by the basest ingratitude and treachery.

¹ Louis was far less ambitious and voluptuous. He ruled Holland well.

² Metternich, "Mems.," i, 312. The last phrase refers to Jerome at Cassel.

Pauline behaved far better; she never worried him for crowns or money. On one occasion she said: "I do not care for crowns; if I had wished for one, I should have had it; but I left that taste to my relatives."¹ Her goddess was Venus. Canova's statue of her in the Borghese Villa at Rome recalls her sensuous beauty. Nevertheless, she was a good sister, and, with her mother, accompanied Napoleon to Elba.

We may conclude, then, that Napoleon's conduct as brother is highly creditable. No other founder of a dynasty has done so much for his relatives. As a rule, new men huddle them away into comfortable or comfortless obscurity. Napoleon alone raised his mother, brothers, sisters, and uncle to heights of splendour. He, who gave a new lease of life to monarchy in a time of decadence, also did much by his example to strengthen the institution of the family when impaired by the license of the Jacobins.

The quarrels of the Bonapartes resulted from the impetuosity of their natures. In Joseph and Pauline alone was there a placid strain; and what they lacked in eagerness was fully made up to Napoleon and the rest of them. Proneness to take sides is an Italian characteristic. How else could the almost unintelligible feuds of Guelfs and Ghibellines have for ages deluged the Peninsula with blood? The same peculiarity finds expression in the career of an Italian, who fought fourteen duels to make good his claim that Ariosto was a finer poet than Tasso, and finally on his death-bed confessed that he had never read a line of either

¹ Metternich, "Mems.," i. 310.

of them. It would not be surprising to find that he was a connection of the Bonaparte family; so keen was their partisanship on all questions. Pelet, a Councillor of State, who studied Napoleon closely, noted impetuosity and trickery as prominent traits in his character.¹

I find far more of impetuosity than trickery. True, there were many occasions when he resorted to falsehood and deception. His policy towards the Spanish dynasty in the spring of 1808 is an example of insidious intrigue worthy of the Medici of Florence; and the final cause of his fall in the spring of 1814 was the interception of a letter dictated to Caulaincourt, which proved his lack of sincerity during the negotiations for peace then proceeding at Châtillon.² Napoleon was not ashamed of such conduct. He always meant to win at all costs, and on one occasion said complacently, "I know when to exchange the lion-skin for that of the fox."³

In the main, however, he decidedly preferred the lion's part. The feline ease of his moves would generally have captured the prey had he used less energy and force; but, as his enemies soon perceived, impetuosity often dictated his actions; and these qualities increased in proportion to the strength of the opposition. Here was his weak point. His powers were not held in check by moderation and common sense. During his Egyptian expedition he talked

¹ Pelet, "Napoleon in Council" (Eng. ed.), p. 17.

² A. Fournier, "Der Congress von Châtillon," pp. 231-232.

³ Pelet, p. 277.

wildly about carrying his little force in Syria either towards the Euphrates and India, or else towards Constantinople, whence he would "take Europe in the rear." So, too, during his intervention in Spain in 1808, which proved to be the beginning of the end, he penned the following words: "I may find the Pillars of Hercules in Spain, but I shall not find the limits of my power. Ever since I have been in the service I have seen nothing so cowardly as these Spanish mobs and troops."¹ This was written shortly before the arrival of news of the surrender of 22,000 French troops to an approximately equal number of Spaniards at Baylen—a fit retort to this senseless boast.

Yet this overweening and passionate temper was generally held under the control of a firm will. Local tradition at Boulogne has preserved an example of this. In July 1804, during Napoleon's sojourn at that town to prepare for the invasion of England, he chanced to order a review of the flotilla on a morning when the commander, Admiral Bruix, observed signs of a coming gale. As responsible for the safety of the flotilla in the roadstead, he reported that it would be impossible to hold the review. Napoleon at once rode to the admiral's quarters, his eyes blazing with passion at this unexpected disobedience. In vain did Bruix assure him that a storm was brewing. The Emperor replied, "The consequence is my affair, and mine only. Obey at once." "Sire," came the reply, "I will not obey." At once Napoleon stepped forward,

¹ Lecestre, "*Lettres inédites de Nap.*," i, 226.

and raised his riding-whip as if to strike Bruix. Nothing daunted, the admiral laid his hand on his sword, exclaiming, "Sire, beware." For some seconds the men stood glaring at one another; then Napoleon flung down the whip and Bruix let go the sword-handle. They parted. Magon, the second-in-command, gave the order for the review, which resulted in the loss of some scores of men by drowning.¹

Another case, in which the Emperor mastered his temper more completely, occurred early in the Russian campaign of 1812. In his anxiety to surprise the Russian rearguard in Vilna, he ordered the famous cavalry general, Montbrun, to push on with his corps and seize the magazines. Etiquette required that the order should come from Murat, Commander-in-Chief of the cavalry. He, therefore, on seeing Montbrun's advance, angrily bade him retire, and, despite Montbrun's explanation of the affair, persisted in this punctilio, sent forward another cavalry corps, and lost the prize at Wilna. Napoleon, rightly indignant at Montbrun's retirement, vehemently reproached him in presence of Murat. In vain did Montbrun glance appealingly at Murat to exculpate him. *Le beau sabreur* remained sheepishly silent. At last, unable to endure Napoleon's reprimand, Montbrun drew his sword and whirled it high in the air, and galloped off, exclaiming, "You may go to the devil, all of you." Napoleon remained speechless with rage; but, to the surprise of his Staff, he turned his horse and rode away, issuing no order for Montbrun's arrest. On the

¹ F. Nicolay, "Napoleon at the Boulogne Camp," ch. ix.

way back Murat explained the incident, and neither Murat nor Montbrun incurred a further reprimand.

These two incidents reveal the controlling power of will over impetuous passion; and herein lay the terror of Napoleon's wrath, that in the highest transports, it never escaped the grip of mind and will. Men who for the time become wild beasts, like Paul I of Russia, are less to be feared than they who can at need master the outbreak and make it subserve the dictates of policy. During the famous scene with Lord Whitworth at the Tuilleries on 13th March 1803, Napoleon never lost his self-possession. He did not (as was reported) strike the British ambassador, or even prepare to do so; he reserved the latter form of argument for the ambassador of Portugal.¹

Though he generally mastered his feelings, it was only by an effort; for by nature he was quick-tempered. Nervous energy appeared in his terse comments, the twitching of his muscles, the frown that quickly clouded his brow, his rapid pacing up and down the room while dictating letters, and, in the winter, his habit of standing before the fire and kicking the logs with his heel.² But the rapid intuitions of a calculating brain and the control of a sovereign will endowed him with the strong qualities characteristic of all dispositions.

In dwelling thus briefly on incidents that reveal character, one is apt to exaggerate the salient points

¹ Mr. Oscar Browning, "England and Napoleon," pp. 104, 116.

² "Méms. de Gaudin, Duc de Gaëte," i, 331.

and leave unnoticed the ordinary outlines. Let us, then, remember that for the most part the bearing of Napoleon was cheery and unaffected, pleasing yet dignified. There was something in that short figure which overawed the giants, Alexander of Russia and Frederick William of Prussia. Yet in the presence of those to whom he granted his friendship he, for the most part, maintained an easy familiarity, while his suggestive and incisive remarks opened up new vistas of thought or lit up hackneyed themes. At Erfurt, in 1808, while the elegant dancing of the Czar Alexander drew much attention, the chief centre of attraction was the dispute of the little Corsican with Wieland on the merits and demerits of Tacitus. He could transact complex affairs of State, and yet devote mental energy to an interview with Goethe, which charmed that monarch of the realms of thought. Such a union of powers had not been seen in the modern world; for Frederick the Great's patronage of literature and the arts was stilted and artificial when compared with the living interest of Napoleon in great themes. In truth his supremacy rested largely on his natural powers and on the range of his studies in youth, which his marvellous memory enabled him to utilize through a long career.

Here again he was well equipped for the struggle of life. He thought clearly, sorted his facts in the compartments of his brain, and had the mental energy and tact which brought them out for use at the right moment. At St. Helena he said to Gourgaud: "In part I owe the good measures that I adopted to my

knowledge of Mathematics and my clear ideas on everything. My memory is singular. In youth I knew the logarithms for more than thirty or forty numbers. In France I knew not only the names of the officers of all the regiments, but the places where they were recruited; I even knew the spirit animating them.”¹ This was no idle boast. On his return from Boulogne to Paris in September 1805, he met a detachment of troops wandering uncertain of the whereabouts of the main body. He inquired the number of the regiment, and, calculating by the date of its departure from the coast, and the route he had prescribed, named the place where it ought to be.² Further, as will appear in Lecture III, if he did not know what he needed to know, he was not deterred by silly nervousness or pompous self-sufficiency from asking questions. To all about him he communicated the passion for thoroughness, which is the first condition of success.

Above all, there burnt in him the flame of genius. It defies analysis; it baffles description; but generals and troops felt the spell. Civilians who sought to control the young warrior found themselves in the meshes of an all-controlling will—why, they knew not; but one after another they succumbed. Animal magnetism is perhaps a necessary concomitant to genius, which may be the effluence of exceptional and super-abundant vitality. In any case, he who has it not will not go far in time of turmoil. He who has it will control the ductile mass. The elder Pitt possessed

¹ Gourgaud, “Journal,” ii, 109.

² Lavalette, “Méms.,” ch. 24.

the resplendent charm, which flickered feebly in his son. Lafayette utterly lacked it, while to Mirabeau it was vouchsafed in full measure. At times Danton's being throbbled with masterful power, though from *insouciance* he fell at the supreme crisis. We go far to explain the fortunes of France when we duly assess the magnetic influence of Mirabeau, Danton, Bonaparte.

We have now surveyed some of the characteristics which enabled the great Corsican to charm, conquer, and control. At all points he outstripped all competitors; and, marvellous as were his exploits, he himself transcended them. It is said that one of the charms of the oratory of the Earl of Chatham lay in the indefinable superiority of the man himself over his orations, even at the height of their power. So, too, we may assert that, able though Napoleon was in the Cabinet and on the battle-field, he was far more than an astute diplomatist, a discerning lawgiver, a triumphant warrior, a great Emperor. He was greatest of all as man

LECTURE II

THE JACOBIN

“The person who really commands the army is your master, the master of your Assembly, the master of your whole Republic.”
—BURKE, *Reflections on the French Revolution*.

I N the political realm revolutions bring about results not unlike those produced by earthquakes in the physical sphere. The upheaval breaks up the old order and jostles together individuals, classes, and nations in the most surprising way, the outcome finally being the initiation of new and potent energies, though at the cost of great suffering in the present. States are often the stronger for these trying experiences. Even civil strifes sometimes set free great and unsuspected powers, as appears in the records of Greece and mediæval Italy. England was never so powerful as after the Civil War, in which she discovered Cromwell; and France, as Pitt prophesied in February 1790, speedily recovered from the time of anarchy, and stood forth as the greatest of European Powers. One condition of recovery was that she should find her Cromwell, and she found a greater than he.

Here again it was the Revolution which brought them together by a combination seemingly impossible. But for that event Bonaparte would probably have

figured in history as a greater Paoli, the liberator of Corsica from the French yoke. As to the sequel, imagination may soar far and wide. Certainly Corsica was too small a sphere for his energies; and the task of revolutionizing Italy, or of setting the East to rights, would have appealed to his daring fancy and ardent temperament. But it is scarcely possible to picture him espousing the cause of France under the *ancien régime*. Though educated at Brienne and Paris, and trained for her army, he was a foreigner at heart down to the year 1790.

His note-books supply proof of this. In a note, written at Paris in November 1787, probably as preface to a projected work on Corsica, he reminds his countrymen that they are subjects of a great monarchy, only the defects of which are felt by them; and, he adds, they will perhaps find a cure for these evils only in the course of centuries.¹ It is almost certain that he set about his early studies in the hope of liberating Corsica from France. As we saw in the last lecture, his nature thrilled responsive to the sentiment of the age. The hard, matter-of-fact side of his being, which was ultimately to prevail amidst the turmoil of life, had not as yet overshadowed the tenderer instincts. He loved the country; and romance, music, and poetry stirred him. He wrote exciting little tales of adventure. His prose seethed up in almost volcanic fervour, boiling over with appeals to the heart, to virtue, to all the virtues: "O Rousseau," he exclaims, in the "Discours de Lyon" [1791], "why had it

¹ F. Masson, "Napoléon inconnu," i, 184.

to be that you should live only sixty years! In the interests of virtue you ought to have been immortal; but, had you composed only 'le Devin du Village,' this alone would be much for the happiness of those like thee, and would deserve a statue, to be erected by all who have sensibility." Several other passages could be quoted, passages which at the time call the blush of pride to the cheek of the composer, and a flush of a very different feeling when they are quoted against him ten years later. Assuredly Bonaparte is more lovable because he once wore his heart on his sleeve as became a disciple of Rousseau; and I question whether, even during the heyday of the Empire, he was happier than when, in his garret at Valence or Auxonne, he was apostrophizing the virtues with the fervour of a devotee.

But Rousseau, who called forth the "Sorrows of Werther" was also the man who nerved the Jacobins to their forceful schemes of social regeneration. There is the curious anomaly of the man and of the age. Under the silken glove was the grip of iron. Roseate sentimentalism faded into the glare of the *Jacqueries*; for those who went to the romances of Rousseau to refresh their jaded feelings, often became zealots of his political gospel. It was so with Bonaparte: or, rather, he went to him as the champion of the Swiss and the Corsicans. The potent influence the Genevese thinker is easy to explain. His great work, the "Social Contract," was the gospel of the young democracy. It inspired Frenchmen with faith in an age when religious faith had waned. He

declares the will of the people to be the only source of law, treaties and rights acquired by conquest or purchase (like that of France over Corsica) being null and void by virtue of the primal compact whereby a people becomes a people. Civilization, says Rousseau, corrupts men. Only in the natural instincts and primitive rights will you find the healthy rules of conduct for the individual and State. Back to the Golden Age, he exclaims; and the cry inspires his young admirer to many an outburst against the degradation of the present, the grandeur of the heroic past.

In his first controversial essay, of the year 1786, Bonaparte champions Rousseau against a Genevese pastor named Roustan, who had protested against the attacks on Christianity contained in the "Social Contract" (Book IV, Chapter VIII). Rousseau, intent on proving the universal scope of the general will of the people, had declared that Christianity impaired its power. These are his words: "Jesus came to establish on earth a spiritual religion, which, separating the religious from the political system, destroyed the unity of the State and caused the intestine divisions which have never ceased to agitate Christian nations." Here Bonaparte stoutly defended Rousseau. He declared that Roman Catholicism broke up the unity of the State. "As to the Roman religion (*sic*) there is convincing evidence to prove that by it the unity of the State is broken." The words are significant in view of his later efforts to subject the Roman Catholic Church to his will, as

representing "the general will." But, of course, the greater part of his youthful thesis deals with the arguments of Roustan in defence of the Reformed Church.

Bonaparte does not argue much. He contents himself mainly with dogmatically repeating the dicta of Rousseau. According to Bonaparte, Christians are always thinking about the future life, and therefore care little for poverty and injustice in the present. If the State tries to redress the balance, the Christian will reply that the question is unimportant, since he looks forward to the verdict of the Supreme Judge, who will make good the inequalities of this fleeting existence. This uncivic aloofness, says Bonaparte, settles the question. The Christian is not of this world; therefore he cannot be a citizen. He next accuses Christianity of setting up a special body, which divides the allegiance of the citizen, and may even oppose the Government. True, Christianity tends to make men happy; but so does the Government; and the two processes may clash. Now, we must admit that certain tendencies of the present age justify his forecast; for the modern State seeks to regulate domains of life which formerly pertained solely to the Church. His prophecy is therefore very remarkable. Nevertheless, the essay as a whole bears so many signs of haste and rhapsodic zeal that it need not be taken very seriously, especially the endeavour to overwhelm the Protestant pastor by the assertion that Christianity destroys the unity of the State because it has produced the Order of the Jesuits.

It would be interesting to find out how Bonaparte framed his notions of these other-worldly Christians, who meekly endured all manner of injustice here in view of the Last Judgment; whose quiet obstinacy somehow defeated the beneficent activities of the Government from which they held so culpably aloof. Apart from a few groups of white-robed, star-gazing sectaries, these beings are not known to history, which in the main has found Protestants to be made of far other stuff. It is well to remember that this essay belongs to Bonaparte's seventeenth year, the time of his sojourn at Valence, which also produced the monologue on suicide. Valence is not far from the Cevennes Mountains, which bred Greathearts, not unworldly dreamers. But the trend of the essay was doubtless determined by the fact that Bonaparte had hitherto read much of Rousseau, and little history to balance it.

Nevertheless, this juvenile effort reveals one mental trait which was destined to persist, namely, his resolve to make the State the embodiment of the general will. Thus, in theory, he is a Jacobin, a thorough Revolutionist, three years before the beginning of the Revolution. During the course of that great event the Jacobins came more and more to uphold the programme of Rousseau. Belief in his theories hurried France along in the quest for a social millennium. War with neighbouring Powers infinitely complicated the problem; so that by the end of 1793 affairs tended strongly towards the dictatorship which Rousseau declared to be essential in the last resort for the safe-

guard of popular liberty. Never has a philosopher better befriended a great soldier. A magnetic attraction drew Rousseau towards Corsica, and Bonaparte towards Rousseau. The French Revolution completed the circuit; and hence that flash of cosmic energy, the Napoleonic Empire.

It is in vain that we seek to discover Bonaparte's opinion concerning the early events of the Revolution; for no account survives. He was then in garrison at Auxonne, a small fortress on the River Saône. It is an uninteresting little town; and he was oppressed by ill health and poverty to such an extent as to give up meat. Such is the rumour. The only external events of his first sojourn at Auxonne (June 1788—September 1789), are a narrow escape from drowning in the river owing to cramp, and an expedition to a neighbouring town, Seurre, to repress one of the many riots which took place on the news of the capture of the Bastille. He acted with great firmness, ordering his men to load, and then crying out, "Let all honest people go home; I fire only on the rabble (*la canaille*).” Thus, he drew the line between liberty and license; his fraternity stopped short of rowdies and plunderers. For them the bullet and the bayonet were his argument; and it is probable that, if all in authority had acted with the same decision, France would not have sunk into anarchy.

At this critical time there is only one of his writings which refers to the state of France. It is a careful and detailed summary of the Report on French Finance

presented by Necker to the States-General on 5th May 1789. It showed an annual deficit of more than 56,000,000 francs, and of nearly triple that sum for the previous year. The youth goes over all the suggested economies, and notes that Corsica and some outlying districts have no deputies. Three months later, while in Corsica, he adds a note that a State loan offered at Paris at $4\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. has been a complete failure.¹ We may conclude from these notes, and from his anxiety to return to Corsica in August 1789, that he saw in the difficulties of France the opportunity of freeing his native land.² Bankruptcy at Paris would bring freedom to Ajaccio.

It would be wearisome to attempt a recital of Napoleon's efforts in Corsica during the long furlough September 1789—February 1791. The salient points are as follows: Soon after his arrival he seeks to found a democratic club at Ajaccio, and even to form a National Guard. Both efforts are crushed by the French Governor. Napoleon protests against this high-handed action and journeys to Bastia, the official capital, to make good his protest. He prevails, and is able to reconstitute the Guard at Ajaccio. His action thus far has been against the royal Governor, rather than against France, where, indeed, the King's authority has virtually lapsed. The French National Assembly now alters the relations of Corsica to France: they have been that of the conquered to the conqueror; they now become those

¹ Masson, "Napoléon Inconnu," ii, 54-59.

² Chuquet, "La Jeunesse de Napoléon" (Brienne), p. 359.

of fraternity. The Corsican exiles are allowed to return, Paoli among them, and the island becomes a Department, sharing in the privileges of the Departmental System established early in the year 1790. This is an unlooked-for boon. Only four years previously Napoleon had opined that centuries might elapse before Corsica won her independence: now she gained that boon in all but name. Is it surprising that his being thrilled with joy and gratitude; or that he looked with disfavour on the English leanings of Paoli? Long residence in England had given the old man views very different from those now held by his former admirer. Disagreement between two men so energetic and masterful was inevitable. Boswell had noted the proneness of Paoli to suspicion; and now, as an old man, long exiled by France, the robber of his country's independence, he could not but look with reserve on the ardent young Bonaparte, the founder of a French club and of National Guards who flaunted the tricolour cockade. Thus by degrees there began an estrangement, the Bonapartes heading the French or democratic party which had its chief strength among the younger men in the towns. The interior held to Paoli.

In February 1791 Napoleon returned to take up his military duties at Auxonne. On his way up the Rhone Valley he wrote to his uncle, Fesch, the future Cardinal:

Serve, 8 February 1791.¹

I am in the hut of a poor man, where I take pleasure in

¹ Masson, "Napoléon Inconnu," ii, 195.

writing to you after long conversations with these brave fellows. . . . Everywhere I have found the peasants very firm in their opinions, especially in Dauphiné; they are all resolved to uphold the constitution or die. At Valence I found the people resolute, the soldiers patriots and the officers aristocrats. . . . What is called good society is three-fourths aristocratic, that is, they cover themselves under the mask of partisans of the English constitution.

The same tactics were employed by Paoli. To Bonaparte this conduct was abhorrent; and the breach between him and the old hero became pronounced when the latter poured cold water on his fiery epistle to Count Buttafoco, and repelled his request for further documents needful for a projected history of Corsica with the cutting addition that history ought not to be written in tender years.¹ This heartless reply blighted Bonaparte's Corsican aspirations, and turned them more and more towards France.

In these weeks of poverty spent at Auxonne he worked hard at an essay in competition for a prize offered by the Academy of Lyons, on the question, "What Sentiments ought most to be inculcated to men for their Happiness?" His thesis is very curious. Religion does not figure at all prominently in his reply, which is permeated by the crude materialism of the school of Raynal. The young enthusiast declares that man is born to be happy, nature having dowered him with all the necessary faculties. On the physical side the following are necessities: food, a hut, clothing,

¹ Masson, ii, 201.

a wife. Turning to the mental side, he says we must feel and reason; and these two faculties are the attribute of man. He thus sums up the question. "Accordingly, we must eat, sleep, beget children, feel, and reason, in order to live our lives, therefore to be happy." The life of the Spartans is his ideal; for they laid so much stress on strength and virtue. "Virtue (he adds) consists in courage and force. Energy is the life of the soul, the mainspring of the reason. The excitements of the Spartan were those of the strong man; and the strong man is good; only the weak is wicked."

After this glorification of strength, worthy to rank with that of Thrasymachus in the "Republic" of Plato, the essayist faces the question of inequality, and asks up to what point we may preach to men, and inspire in them the hope of an equality of opportunity. He pictures the case of a young and vigorous peasant, marrying a wife, looking about him with disgust at the superfluities of the idle rich, and going to the priest for advice. "Man," replies the priest, "never reflect about the order of society. God arranges every thing. Resign yourself to His providence. This life is only a journey, during which events are wrought by a justice whose decrees we must not seek to fathom. Believe, obey, never reason, and work. Those are your duties."¹ Bonaparte then turns with equal scorn on the notary who decides these problems by musty parchments. But his revolt against conventions stops short of the institution of property. He does not

¹ Masson, i, 293-296.

gird at the rich, but claims that at the other end of the social scale shall be freeholders, artisans or small tradesmen, able to live out their lives in comfort. In this essay is seen Bonaparte's philosophy of life and Napoleon's title to power. He made no war on the rich, but was resolved to level up the poor to the standard which ensured at least a modicum of enjoyment. As to education, he lays stress on Geometry and History. He calls History: "This basis of the Moral Sciences, this torch of truth, this destroyer of prejudices."—Mathematics and History will enable the governors of the future ideal State to perfect their Logic and guide peoples in the search for truth.¹

To the weeks following on the attempt of Louis XVI to escape to the German frontier, we may assign an interesting little fragment bearing on the question of Republic or Monarchy. It deserves translating in full:

For a long time my tastes have led me to take interest in public affairs. If an unprejudiced publicist could entertain doubts as to the preference which he ought to accord to republicanism or monarchy, I think that to-day his doubts ought to vanish. The Republicans are insulted, calumniated, threatened, and then as sole reason it is urged that republicanism is impossible in France. In truth the monarchical orators have done much for the fall of monarchy; for, after having spent all their breath in vain analyses, they always say that the republican Government is impossible because it is impossible. I have read all the speeches of the mon-

¹ Masson, i, 321.

archical orators, and have seen in them great efforts to sustain a bad cause. They wander off into assertions which they do not prove. In truth, if I had had doubts, the reading of their speeches would have dispelled them. Twenty-five million people, say they, cannot exist as a Republic. Without morals, no Republic. A great nation must have a centre of union. That twenty-five million people cannot exist as a Republic, is an impolitic saying. . . ."

There ends this fragment. It is all the more remarkable because six years later, at the end of his Italian campaign, he quoted with gusto the assertion which he formerly derided. "What an idea," he said to Melzi and Miot. "A Republic of 30,000,000 men, and with our manners, our vices! How is it possible? That is a fancy of which the French are at present full, but it will pass away like all the others."¹ To explain this entire change of opinion is my aim in this lecture.

Firstly, we notice that his democratic beliefs sprang from a narrow experience and a partial study of life. In Rousseau his clear-cut, ardent nature found that mingling of opposites which for the time satisfied his reason and fired his fancy. The symmetry and dogmatism of the Genevese thinker appealed to the Latin peoples in a way that Anglo-Saxons cannot understand. The Romance nations revelled in his sentimentalism; but they also delighted in a political geometry which advanced from definitions to postulates, from axioms to propositions, seemingly with the triumphant certainty of Euclid; so that when the convert closed the book he could exclaim—"Q.E.F" For

¹ "Méms. de Miot de Melito," i, ch. vi.

it was no abstract proposition; it was a problem of political construction, which Rousseau so confidently essayed; and until the student looked away from that symmetrical structure to the world of fact, the effect was irresistible.

We must further remember that Rousseau wrote the "Social Contract" with a Swiss canton, not France, in view. He expressly stated that his pattern Republic could not be realized in a great country like France; and the French Jacobins committed an unpardonable crime alike against Rousseau and common sense in their persistent effort to apply the principles of his work to a great State and a social fabric founded on Feudalism, unified by the monarchy, and extended by war. Now, Bonaparte never was guilty of this absurd blunder, so fatal to Robespierre, St. Just, and the country which they dreamed of perfecting. In his studies of Rousseau the young Corsican doubtless kept in view his native island, the very land which the theorist of Geneva had declared to be worthy of an ideal constitution drawn up by himself. Corsica herself, however, rejected the democratic ideals of Rousseau. Bonaparte during his last furlough in Corsica battled bravely for the French cause; but the islanders claved to Paoli as monarchist dictator; and the Bonaparte family had to flee to France (June 1793).

In reality nothing was more favourable to his ultimate advancement than this last furlough in Corsica. I agree with M. Masson in thinking that he had quitted Paris before the September massacres. Certainly he was absent at the time of the execution of

Louis and subsequent events. He also remained in the South of France during the first part of the Reign of Terror, and he therefore came to the front with hands clean, while so many generals and Carnot himself, "the organizer of victory," were stained with blood. The Corsican *Caporale* can have caught only distant echoes of these outrages: but they must have produced in him feelings of loathing such as all true patriots felt. Civil strifes always dull civic sentiment; and I question whether he afterwards felt absolute confidence in French democracy. It is true that on his arrival in Provence he sided with the Jacobins; but the choice probably resulted from necessity quite as much as conviction. For, firstly, he could not without gross inconsistency oppose in Provence the cause he had championed in Corsica; and secondly, the Jacobins, now in power, were beginning to organize the national defence with splendid energy. The patriotic instinct, nay, the sense of self-preservation, bade Frenchmen support any Government which bade fair to expel the invaders. However irregular the overthrow of the Girondins at Paris on 2nd June, the triumphant Jacobins showed far greater capacity than they. "Rally round the Republic, one and indivisible"—such was the battle-cry. "No quarter to Royalists, to Federalists, to those who impair the striking power of France." The cry appealed both to advocates of Rousseau and believers in common sense. To drive out the foreigners and crush malcontents was the first and most obvious of duties.

This is the burden of Bonaparte's pamphlet, "Le

Souper de Beaucaire," which he wrote at or near that town, probably early in August 1793. Possibly the theme was suggested by an actual conversation with royalist sympathisers whom he may have met there or at Avignon. Under the thin disguise of "a Soldier," he warns two royalist merchants of Marseilles, that their cause is doomed to fail before the well-appointed Jacobin force. The risings of Caen, Lyons,¹ Bordeaux, Grenoble and Avignon having collapsed, the men of the seaboard must accept the new Jacobin Constitution. Rich Marseilles must not jeopardize her existence for what is now a dream. The Marseilles merchant contests this and claims that all Provence will rise against the Jacobins, who are detestable assassins; Marseilles is not like la Vendée, which wants a King; she wants a true Republic; she fights, not under the *fleur-de-lys*, but under the tricolour. Bonaparte replies that Paoli had hoisted the tricolour in Corsica, but only in order to deceive the people. Facts soon showed him in his true colours; and, whatever pretexts are put forward at Marseilles, that town will be fighting for Spain and Austria if it resists the Republic. A citizen of Nîmes and a manufacturer of Montpellier drive home the same truth, that, whatever the Marseillais may call themselves, they are in effect enemies of France. The retort comes back that the Jacobins are guilty of

¹ This must refer to some Republican success at Lyons: but the city did not surrender until 9th October. Avignon surrendered on 26th July, and Bonaparte entered Beaucaire on the 29th. Admiral Hood occupied Toulon on 28th August. These facts fix the date of the pamphlet.

assassination and other horrors, and Marseilles will call in the Spanish fleet rather than admit them. At this Bonaparte fires up. He warns the Marseillais that such an act of treachery to the nation will brand their city with infamy: within a week 60,000 patriots will fly at them if they are guilty of treason. Do they not now see the extent of their error? Will they not throw off the yoke of the small minority of traitors and regain the town for the Republic—"You have been misled," he exclaims, "it is no new thing for the people to be led astray by a handful of conspirators and intriguers. From all time the good nature and ignorance of the multitude have been the cause of most of the civil wars. . . . Marseilles will always be the centre of Liberty, tearing only a leaf or two out of the book of its history."

Such is the end of this interesting *brochure*. Its tone is opportunist rather than Jacobinical. The instinct in favour of national unity counts for more than any political theory. Bonaparte admits that the Marseillais may at heart be good republicans; but their actions are those of bad patriots. His censures are less bitter than those of the citizens of Nîmes and Montpellier. May we not see in this his aloofness from these civil broils and a desire to end them, if possible, by peaceable means? On the whole, the pamphlet is a very creditable production. The dialogue is well sustained; and the conclusion is such as every friend of France and of progress could endorse.

The incident has been skilfully visualized by a French artist. Amidst the homely surroundings of an

inn at Beaucaire, lit up by a strong side-light, the group eagerly discusses this great question. The four civilians are seated at the supper-table and gaze fixedly at the thin figure of the lieutenant, who stands erect, almost defiant, at the end of the board. His thin, sallow features are aglow with enthusiasm as he dilates on the crime of resisting the Republic and helping its enemies. The sleek merchants of Marseilles lean back aghast as they foresee doom written plainly on their efforts; while the men of Nîmes and Montpellier look up with wonder and admiration at this indomitable champion. The picture is a spirited embodiment of Bonaparte's thoughts, which worthily interpreted the instincts of self-preservation throbbing through the French nation.

The forecast of the young officer was singularly correct. The Jacobins of Marseilles, helped by the army of Carteaux, soon restored the authority of the Convention, thereby forestalling an Anglo-Spanish occupation of the town. But on 28th August, at the invitation of the Moderates and Royalists of Toulon, Admiral Hood occupied that stronghold, thus setting in motion events which served to bring Bonaparte to the front. As is well known he was hastily summoned to take command of the artillery of the Republicans.¹ After the re-capture of Toulon he took no part in the fell work of guillotining. He left that to Fréron and other creatures of the Convention. In a short time (6th February 1794) he was named Brigadier-General,

¹ See Colin, "L'Éducation militaire de Napoléon," pp. 181-186; Masson, li, 478.

commanding the artillery of the Army of Italy, whose headquarters were at Nice.

His duties now brought him into contact with the younger Robespierre, who, along with Saliceti, had recommended that promotion. The two young men saw much of each other, and Augustin Robespierre thought highly of Bonaparte's abilities; for in his letter of 5th April 1794 to his brother, he names him among other patriotic officers as a man of transcendent merit. But he adds these curious words. "He is a Corsican: he offers only the guarantee of a man of that nation who has resisted the caresses of Paoli, and whose estates have been ravaged by that traitor." An undertone of suspicion may be heard under these phrases. The Corsicans were noted intriguers; and young Robespierre doubtless felt that he had little or no hold over Bonaparte. Suspicion, however, pervaded all the relations of life in that time of the Terror; and it may be that the two were on friendly terms, so long as their words and acts were those of good Jacobins. As to Bonaparte's inmost sympathies at this time we know very little. On hearing of the death of young Robespierre he wrote: "I was somewhat affected by his catastrophe; for I was fond of him, and looked on him as pure; but, had he been my father, I would have slain him had he aspired to tyranny." Robespierre's sister, who saw Bonaparte at Nice, describes him as not only a Republican, but a Montagnard, that is, a convinced follower of her brother. She calls him "a partisan of liberty in the widest sense, and of equality in the truest sense." As is well known, Bonaparte,

during the Consulate, awarded to her a pension of 3,600 francs, a fact which proves his general sympathy with the younger Robespierres. Whether he was a thoroughly convinced follower of the dictator is open to question. I believe that Bonaparte's good sense would have revolted against the effort to crush France into the mould of the "Social Contract" of Rousseau.

Not long after the execution of the Robespierres at Paris he fell into great danger. He was officially denounced as a hypocritical intriguer, the contriver of plans for the Robespierres, the betrayer of the plans of campaign to the enemy, and guilty of acts of treachery during a recent mission to the city of Genoa. These reckless charges could not be sustained even in those mad days, when politics became the art of guillotining your neighbours before they guillotined you. The one thing needful was to be highly useful to the State; and this probably saved Bonaparte. The Army of Italy badly needed his technical and topographical knowledge; and on these grounds alone the Commission ordered his release, but without reinstating him in his rank of general (20th August). The chief interest of this incident lies in the proof which it reveals of Bonaparte's calm and serenity in presence of imminent danger. While in prison at Fort Carré at Antibes (hard by the scene of his triumphant return from Elba in 1814) he wrote these words: "The feelings of my conscience keep my spirit calm; but those of my heart are in turmoil, and I feel that, with a brain cool, but a heart on fire, one cannot make up one's

mind to live long under suspicion." Also to his aide-de-camp, Junot, he wrote: "Men may be unjust to me, my dear Junot, but it is enough to be innocent: my conscience is the tribunal before which I arraign my conduct. My conscience is calm when I question it. Therefore do nothing about me; you would only compromise me." This calm of conscious innocence bespeaks a great man. At no time in his career does Napoleon rise to a loftier moral height than during those eleven days of imprisonment at Antibes.

His fortitude was to be still further tried. An expedition for the recovery of Corsica, in which he served as general in command of the artillery, was a total failure. It fell in with the British fleet, lost two vessels, and the remainder with great difficulty succeeded in reaching Toulon (March 1795). Shortly after his return to that seaport he received an order from the Minister of War to betake himself to the Army of the West as general of infantry. This was a serious rebuff. While cherishing a hope to share in the forthcoming invasion of Italy, he is to be sent off to hunt the *Chouans* in the forests of la Vendée, a service which he detested and in a capacity inferior to that of general of artillery.¹ In the hope of seeing this order changed in one of the many political changes of the time, he at once set out for Paris, taking with him Marmont, Junot, and Louis Bonaparte.

Unfortunately, the chief account of him at that interesting time of mental transition is that of Mme. Junot. As a rule, the interest of French *Memoirs* rises

¹ Colin, p. 328.

in proportion to their mendacity; and certainly those of the future Duchesse d'Abrantès are interesting. She, however, brings Bonaparte to Paris nine months before the actual time of arrival, which somewhat tells against her account of his sharp features, his yellow and emaciated cheeks, his slovenly appearance, enhanced by ill-combed, ill-powdered hair, hanging down over his gray overcoat; she also dwells on his lack of gloves (a useless luxury he deemed them), and badly fitting and ill-blackened boots. It is the external which always attracts her notice. But there is one anecdote which seems life-like. On her mother, Mme. Permon, naming Saliceti to him, a smile passed rapidly over his lips, and he said: "Ah! he wanted to ruin me; but my star prevented him. However I must not boast of my star; for who knows what may be my fate?" Another story of Mme. Junot is that Bonaparte came to their house at the close of that day of riot and outrage, 1 Prairial (20th May), asking for hospitality, as he had been unable to procure food while wandering about the central districts; that he had been in the Convention while the mob terrorized the deputies of France, cutting off the head of Féraud, who sought to protect the President, and holding it up on a pike before him. In describing the scene Bonaparte exclaimed: "Truly, if we continue thus to sully our Revolution, it will be a disgrace to be a Frenchman." Unfortunately for the story, Bonaparte was at Châtillon about one hundred miles away from Paris, at the time of these tragic occurrences.¹ But

¹ Masson, "Nap. et sa Famille," i, 108.

he arrived at the capital seven or eight days afterwards, and he may have spoken the words last cited; for they certainly express his contempt for mob rule.

In fact, all thinking men saw the urgent need of repressing the disorderly elements of the populace. Such a time comes in the course of every Revolution; and happy is the State which finds a leader strong enough to restore order and disinterested enough to preserve liberty.

That good fortune was not the lot either of ancient Rome or of modern Paris. The populace at Rome cared little about political freedom if they had bread and circus games; and Tiberius took care to give them both, even after bad harvests.¹ Napoleon also, as ruler of France, always sought to "make work" in time of depression, and expressed fear of the people when embittered by privations. As for merely political discontent, he held it cheap.² Bonaparte's destiny brought him to Paris at the time when the forces of order triumphed. That city was gyrating in the vicious circle which has more than once enclosed her. A great pleasure resort is apt to beget both revolution and reaction. The contrast between the ostentatious wealth of the few and the poverty of the many breeds discontent more quickly than elsewhere; and if, as in the year 1789, events lead to an explosion, the ruin of the various trades dependent on the rich tends sooner or later to promote a reaction. The events of 1789-95, no less than those of 1848-9 and 1870-1

¹ Tacitus, "Annals," bk. iv, ch. vi.

² Chaptal, "Souvenirs," pp. 287, 291.

bear witness to the strength of the opposing tendencies which have operated at Paris in times of strain. There, as also at Vienna in 1848-9, violent outbreaks have been followed, almost automatically, by reaction and repression. A pleasure-city exercises a harmful unsettling influence on the Government located in its midst.

Now, Bonaparte came to Paris when the star of Liberty was paling before those of Mercury, Mars, and Venus. He soon felt their charm. In July 1795 he describes in glowing terms the increase of diversion and display. "Luxury, pleasure, and the arts are reviving in a surprising manner. Libraries (*sic*), courses on History, Chemistry, Botany, Astronomy, come in succession. Everything is accumulated here to distract and make life agreeable. One is withdrawn from one's thoughts. And what means are there of taking a dark view of this mental activity and this social whirlpool? Women are everywhere, at the play, at the theatre, on the promenade, in the library. In the savant's study you meet with very pretty women. . . . A woman needs only six months of Paris to know what is due to her and what is her empire."

Thus, Bonaparte is a devotee of Paris, the centre of the arts and of social life, the city of the *jeunesse dorée*, which has chased back the Jacobins to the outer slums. As for politics, his chief desire is for a Government strong enough to repress disorder, to keep a tight hand on the Royalists, and to carry on the war to a triumphant issue. This explains why, after the conclusion of the peace with Spain, he draws up plans

for transferring 30,000 troops from the Pyrenees to the Maritime Alps to batter in the Austro-Sardinian defence. Here is the secret motive which holds him to Paris, outstaying the time of furlough before he takes up his duties in la Vendée. For the time his disobedience leads to degradation from the rank of general. But fortune repairs his error, if error it be. The rising of the malcontents of Paris on 13 Vendémiaire (5th October) gives him his chance; and he sides with the French Convention in crushing a movement, which, if not definitely royalist, would certainly have become so.

There is a story to the effect that at first he doubted whether to take the side of the Republican Government or of the then malcontent majority. I do not believe that he hesitated for one moment. His earlier letters show that he hoped much from the new constitution; he wanted, not a Jacobinical Government, but a strong Government, prompt to seize the opportunity and overwhelm Austria in North Italy. It was naught to him that the franchise was narrowed and other reactionary changes came in. The new *regime*, the Directory, promised to be vigorous; that was all to him.

Thenceforth the conquest of Italy filled his thoughts, to the exclusion of the civic feelings once so strong. In his proclamation at the beginning of the campaign he addressed his men as soldiers, not as citizens, the noble appellation hitherto always used; and the incentive to action is the hope of glory and booty, not of spreading the bounds of freedom. True, in the

month of May, he informed the Italians that the French were coming to break their chains; but at the same time he wrote to the Directory, "We will levy 20,000,000 francs in exactions from this country: it is one of the richest in the world, but entirely exhausted by five years of war."¹ Of the Italians themselves he spoke in terms of utter contempt, even for the volunteers who came forth to follow his standards. At the end of the campaign occurred the betrayal of Venice, the pretext being the rising at Verona, which resulted from the exactions of the French troops. As is well known, by means of guile Bonaparte secured the unopposed entry of the French into Venice and the seizure of the fleet and arsenal. On the 26th May 1797 he assured the new democratic Municipality of Venice that he would do all in his power to consolidate its liberties, and to place Italy once more among the free and independent nations of the world. But at the very same time he offered to the Hapsburg Court the City of Venice and the Eastern half of her possessions, excusing this conduct by the following words to the French Directory: "That populace, foolish, cowardly, in no wise fitted for liberty, without land, without waters, should naturally be left to those to whom we assign the mainland (*i.e.* to the Austrians). We will take all their ships, we will despoil the arsenal, take away all the cannon, destroy the Bank, and keep Corfu and Ancona for ourselves."

¹ By the end of Frimaire, An VI (20th December 1797) he levied 39,418,000 francs from Italy ("Nap. Corresp.," iii, 71).

The words Ancona, Corfu are sign-posts pointing to the East. There was to be his next great enterprise. We are apt to be dazzled by the brilliance of his exploits. In conception and performance they remind us of Alexander the Great and Cœur de Lion. But the medal has a reverse. The seizure of Egypt was an act of unprovoked aggression against a friendly Power, Turkey. It therefore opened the cycle of wars of conquest and aggrandizement. The principles of the French Revolution, dulled in Italy, were forgotten in the Levant. War there appeared in its most barbarous guise. Incidents, such as the emptying of sackloads of heads of rebels in the great square at Cairo, in order to cow the rebellious populace, and the slaughter in cold blood of 2,500 Turkish prisoners on the seashore at Jaffa, brutalized the French troops and their commander. The East has always exerted a subtle influence on its invaders. In one of his noblest quatrains, Matthew Arnold sang of her quiet invincibility:

The East bowed low before the blast
In patient deep disdain;
She let the legions thunder past
And plunged in thought again.¹

But the captured East has often prevailed over its would-be captors. The decay of Athenian democracy dates from the campaigns in Asia Minor. Rome underwent a similar decadence largely from the like cause; and French democracy, already compromised in 1797-8 by the spoliation of Italy and Switzerland,

¹ M. Arnold, "Obermann once more."

was to be hopelessly warped by the contest with the semi-barbarous hordes of Egypt and Syria. A Republic which seeks to hold down Eastern fanatics must, to some extent, use Eastern methods; and generals, administrators, and soldiers employed in that work imbibe crudely professional notions which tell against citizenship. Twenty years earlier, contact with the soldiers of Washington had helped to win the French army for the Revolution; now the fights with Mamelukes and Turks served to make its officers the instruments of political reaction.

I have now sought to trace in outline the development of Bonaparte's character from his eighteenth to thirtieth year. The usual mistake is to regard that character as fixed and solid. True, it became so in later life; but his youthful nature was emotional, impressionable, almost fluid. Of the many indiscretions to which such a being is prone, I believe there is only one to which he did not succumb; he never wrote a line of poetry. But he ran through nearly the whole gamut of emotions of the Rousseau cult, probably with the result of wearying his nerves before the strain of the political game into which he plunged in 1790. As we have seen, he then gave his heart to French democracy, but, I believe, with the reservations prescribed by insight and good sense. Failing to win Corsica for that cause, he sought to serve it in France; but during the Reign of Terror there is no proof that he sympathized either with the more visionary of Robespierre's aims or the sanguinary methods adopted

to enforce them. At this time he sided with the Jacobins, not as Terrorists, but as unflinching champions of national unity.

Nevertheless, these horrible strifes left their mark on him. As a Corsican, he was early inured to scenes of blood. The wholesale guillotinings at Toulon and elsewhere early in 1794 made him even more callous; and to the spring of 1794 belongs that reckless incident at the Col di Tenda, described in the last lecture, when he flung away the lives of a few soldiers so as to give his mistress the sight of a skirmish. His unjust imprisonment which soon followed must have aroused disgust of Parisian rule; and by the year 1795 he figures as a man of pleasure, enamoured of Paris, less so of the Republic, but ready to fight for any strong Government which will put down the Royalists and push on the war with vigour. For by the summer of 1795 the vision of the conquest of Italy has enthralled him. He realizes it to the full; and then the East beckons him. In the sphere of character the result is that in 1799 he comes back to the western world, not a Cincinnatus, but a Caesar.

In August 1800, as First Consul, he paid a visit in company with Girardin to Ermenonville, the last residence of Rousseau. On entering the death-chamber he uttered these remarkable words: "He is a fool, your Rousseau: it is he who has brought us to our present condition." "Well!" replied Girardin, "We are not so badly off." Napoleon said no more at the time; but, as was his wont, he developed the thought with even greater emphasis on visiting the tomb of

Rousseau in the Isle of Poplars, hard by. Gazing at it, he said: "It would have been better for the repose of France that this man had never been born."—"Why so, Citizen Consul?" asked Girardin.—"It is he who prepared the French Revolution."—"I should have thought, Citizen Consul, that it was not for you to complain of the Revolution."—"Well," replied Napoleon, "the future will discover whether it was not better, for the repose of the world, that neither Rousseau nor I had ever been born."—In those words, which sound the death-knell of Jacobinism, we hear the first clarion of advancing Imperialism.

LECTURE III

THE WARRIOR

Les principes de César ont été les mêmes que ceux d'Alexandre et d'Annibal; tenir ses forces réunies, n'être vulnérable sur aucun point, se porter avec rapidité sur les points importants, s'en rapporter aux moyens moraux, à la réputation de ses armes, à la crainte qu'il inspirait, et aussi aux moyens politiques pour maintenir dans la fidélité ses allies.—NAPOLEON, *Notes sur l'Art de Guerre*.

THE term warrior may be taken to include the more special words—fighter, inspirer of armies, commander-in-chief, strategist, and tactician. It is the widest of appellations; and I apply it to Napoleon because his genius for war was the most universal known to authentic history. For us he is the real Wodin, the western Alexander the Great, the modern Caesar.

The fighting instinct throbbed in his blood during his tender years, witness that curious piece of self-revelation imparted to Antommarchi at St. Helena. When teased by his companions for his fondness of a little girl, he would pick up sticks or stones, and pelt or rush at his tormentors, without thinking of their size or number. What is bred in the bone, comes out through life; and this extraordinary hardiness and pugnacity, inherited seemingly from the Pietra-Santa family, distinguished him from first to last, from the

first charge at Montenotte to the onset of the Imperial Guard at Waterloo. In this combative instinct lies the secret of his power over the soldiery. Men will do anything and go anywhere for a fighting general, provided that he cares for their interests and touches their imagination.

Here again he was an ideal leader. To his generals he for the most part turned the colder side of his nature, exacting instant and unquestioning obedience, giving them abundant opportunities to enrich themselves at the expense of the liberated peoples, and finally dowering them with immense domains. Sometimes, however, he fired them with burning words, as in the parting injunctions to General Lauriston, to whom he entrusted the command of the troops on Villeneuve's fleet designed for a landing in England: "If you experience reverses, always remember these three things—union of your forces, activity, and a firm resolve to die with glory. These are the three great principles of the military art, which have made Fortune favour me in all my operations. Death is nothing; but to live vanquished and without glory is to die every day."¹

His proclamations to the soldiers pulsate with national pride. Never has a man of different race so profoundly stirred great armies. From the time of his first appeal, in the spring of 1796, to march onward and conquer Italy, to the last proclamation, five days before Waterloo, urging every Frenchman to conquer or die, he showed a supreme art in kindling the passion

¹ "Nap. Corresp.," x, 69.

for glory in the rank and file; and when that flame burns brightly in Celts they will do anything. As Napoleon said, love of glory is with Frenchmen a sixth sense. He set himself to develop it, often treating his men with the old republican *camaraderie*. In times of exceptional strain, as on the night before Jena, he encouraged the engineers and artillerymen by appearing at their side, watching their toil, and speaking the words that change men into Titans. Or again, he would go over the battlefield, feeling the pulse or the heart of the recumbent forms, and showing genuine satisfaction when he discovered signs of life that had not before been observed. Especially he loved to talk with his Old Guard, asking them how long and where they had served, the number of their wounds, and so forth. He it was who nicknamed them *les grognards*, the very best means, surely, of keeping grumbling within bounds.

What wonder that Wellington calculated the presence of Napoleon on a battlefield to be worth 40,000 troops, not only because his moves were skilful, his blows telling, but because his very presence nerved the men to do their utmost, and gave them supreme confidence in the result. Thiébault relates that early in 1797, when the French were about to invade Austria through the Carnic Alps, the humblest privates spoke confidently of entering Vienna. They did not trouble as to how it would come to pass. Enough for them that Napoleon was at their head.¹ This explains the marvels of the years 1796-1814. They were

¹ Thiébault, "Méms.," i, 305 (Eng. edit.).

due to the influence of one who excelled both as a strategist, a tactician, and an inspirer of men.

In the year 1796 the opportunity was unique. The First Coalition of the Powers against France was fast crumbling to pieces. Tuscany, Prussia and Spain had come to terms with France, and Spain was on the point of making war on England. In four campaigns the raw levies of the French Republic had hewn their way to victory. "With bread and iron you can reach China"—such was the cry of one of the early leaders. Victory or the guillotine was the alternative before the generals of the Republic; and this drastic working of the law of the survival of the fittest, thinning out misfits who elsewhere would have gained promotion, made the French forces a pre-Darwinian proof of the strength of that salutary principle. Nearly all armies have good stuff in them; but in those of the monarchist league it was kept under by customs of seniority or Court favouritism; and only after long years of failure did it come to the top. Ultimately the forces of the Great Powers attained to nearly the same degree of efficiency, thanks to the severe lessons taught by France. But in all the campaigns up to 1813 Napoleon displayed his superiority, uniting in his own person the tactical skill of the Archduke Charles, Wellington's power of sustaining a prolonged defensive, and the eager pugnacity of Blücher.

First among the essentials of a great leader are clearness of insight and firmness of purpose. Bonaparte early gave proof of these valuable gifts. At Toulon in September 1793, he saw the importance of

the English battery, called Fort Mulgrave, situated on the height which commanded both the inner and the outer harbours. True, the Commissioners of the Convention had already determined to fire on the British and Spanish fleets with red-hot balls; and that could be done effectively only from that point, the importance of which both Royalists and Republicans alike saw. Early in the defence, namely on 21st September, the British and Spaniards seized that commanding point and began to erect a battery; but, owing to lack of skilled engineers, it was far too weak to resist the continued bombardment and final assault. Moreover, the garrison, in large part Spaniards, offered no very firm resistance. Its capture, therefore, was a task of little difficulty; and it is clear that Bonaparte's name remained unknown at the French War Office.¹ The incident revealed his insight into a problem and his persistent energy, nothing more.

On a far higher plane are his plans of July 1795 for driving the Austrians from Italy. As will soon appear, they traced out exactly the course of events in the year 1796; and hardly less remarkable is the tenacity of his resolve to carry out those designs. He outstays his time of furlough in order to compass his aim; he risks expulsion from the French army in order that he may become its most triumphant leader. He fears not to "put his fortune to the touch," and at last Fortune gives him all.

A sign of a strong nature is the resolve to master every fact that is essential to success. Where a weak

¹ Colin, "L'Éducation militaire de Napoléon," p. 337.

or nervous man pretends that he knows, the strong and able man will make sure that he knows. Soon after 13 Vendémiaire, 1795, when Bonaparte was appointed to a command in the Army of the Interior, he was ill acquainted with infantry and cavalry, not to speak of the myriad details of camp life. At once he began to ask the necessary questions. Thiébault graphically describes the incident:

I can still see his little hat, surmounted by a chance plume badly fastened on, his tricolour sash very carelessly tied, his coat cut anyhow, and a sword, which, in truth, did not seem the sort of weapon with which to make his fortune. Flinging his hat on a large table in the middle of the room, he went up to an old general named Krieg, a man with a wonderful knowledge of detail and the author of a very good soldiers' manual. He made him take a seat beside him at the table, and began questioning him, pen in hand, about a host of facts connected with the service and discipline. Some of his questions showed such a complete ignorance of some of the most ordinary things that several of my comrades smiled. I was myself struck by the number of his questions, their order, and their rapidity, no less than by the way in which the answers were caught up, and often found to resolve other questions, which he deduced as consequences from them. But what struck me still more was the sight of a Commander-in-Chief perfectly indifferent about showing his subordinates how completely ignorant he was of various points of the business which the junior of them was supposed to know perfectly; and this raised him a hundred cubits in my eyes.¹

Another quality needful for the warrior is perfect

¹ Thiébault, "Méms.," i, 267-8 (Eng. edit.).

self-confidence, even after a great reverse. This Bonaparte displayed in Egypt after Nelson's triumph at the Battle of the Nile. To keep up the spirits of the men he instituted races, concerts, and all kinds of distractions, besides stimulating the manufacture of gunpowder and the many necessities which the army now had to supply in Egypt itself. What can be finer than his words written to Kléber on 21st August 1798:—"If the English relieve this squadron by another, and continue to overrun the Mediterranean, they will perhaps compel us to do greater things than we intended."? Equally remarkable are his letters to Rear-Admirals Villeneuve and Ganteaume, stating that the British cannot keep up the blockade of Alexandria, because they must convoy the French prizes to some place of safety. During their absence, the Rear-Admirals must rally all the French, Venetian and Maltese vessels in the Mediterranean, thus forming a naval force of eleven sail-of-the-line and five frigates for the assistance of the army in its further operations. In his view, then, Nelson's triumph was an inconvenient, but only temporary check. Contrast this shrewd discernment of Nelson's difficulties, this superb confidence in the ultimate result, with the craven tone of a letter of Tallien after witnessing the naval disaster. "Placed on an eminence near the sea we witness this terrible sight. . . . If ever I have the good luck to land once more on my native soil, nothing shall induce me to quit it again. Of the 40,000 Frenchmen now in Egypt there are not more than four who do not share my feelings." Bonaparte, however, was one of the

four; and therefore the opinion of the mass was of little consequence.

The personality of Napoleon never stood forth so grandly as after a defeat. The most serious blow in the middle part of his career was that dealt him by the Archduke Charles at Aspern-Essling, north-east of Vienna (21st-22nd May 1809). True, the Austrians were nearly double the strength of the French, and the breaking of the bridges over the Danube in Napoleon's rear seriously hampered his operations; but it was difficult, even by all the arts of bulletin-making, to represent that battle as anything else than a terrible reverse. The gravity of the situation weighed down his spirits, an additional cause of dejection being the death of Marshal Lannes. Assembling his generals, he asked their advice. Their opinion in the main was for retreat; but this seems to have awakened his combative instinct, and he replied, in effect, that if they began to retire they would have to shelter behind the Rhine; whereas if they remained and threatened the enemy, it would hold him to that spot and hinder a severe blow at their communications. He would therefore occupy the Lobau Island and Vienna, so as to resume the offensive at the earliest possible time.

The ensuing six weeks rank among the most glorious of his military career. He called up troops from all quarters, even including North Tyrol, where Hofer pressed the French hard; he spurred on to greater exertions Eugène and the French army of Italy, now invading Hungary; he defied the efforts of German

patriotic bands, like those of Schill and the Duke of Brunswick-Oels; and he amused the Archduke Charles with rumours of peace, while all the time he prepared to deal a heavy blow across the Danube at his almost unguarded left flank. The excessive caution of the Archduke, the immobility of Prussia, the delay of the British Government in striking at Antwerp, stand in glaring contrast to the wonderful resourcefulness of Napoleon, who, while held at bay in the heart of a hostile country, and threatened by a rising of German patriots in his rear, triumphantly crossed the Danube and drove his enemy from Wagram. In that battle, it is true, he showed no exceptional skill. Wagram was a day of mere bludgeon work; but the preparations for crossing the Danube, and the superb and triumphant defiance to the threats of half of the Continent, evince the loftiest and most indomitable spirit. As he foresaw after Aspern, a bold front would intimidate the Archduke Charles; and the threat of crossing the Danube in force might be expected to hinder the Austrians from striking at the French communications. His forecast was justified. Genius paralysed talent. The Emperor retained the initiative, even while acting on the defensive, and thus succeeded in keeping open his communications with France. The nervousness and comparative inactivity of the Archduke at this time deprive him, in my judgment, of all claim to be ranked among the world's great commanders.

In a single lecture it is impossible to do more than

illustrate the outstanding features of Napoleonic warfare. They may be summarized as follows:

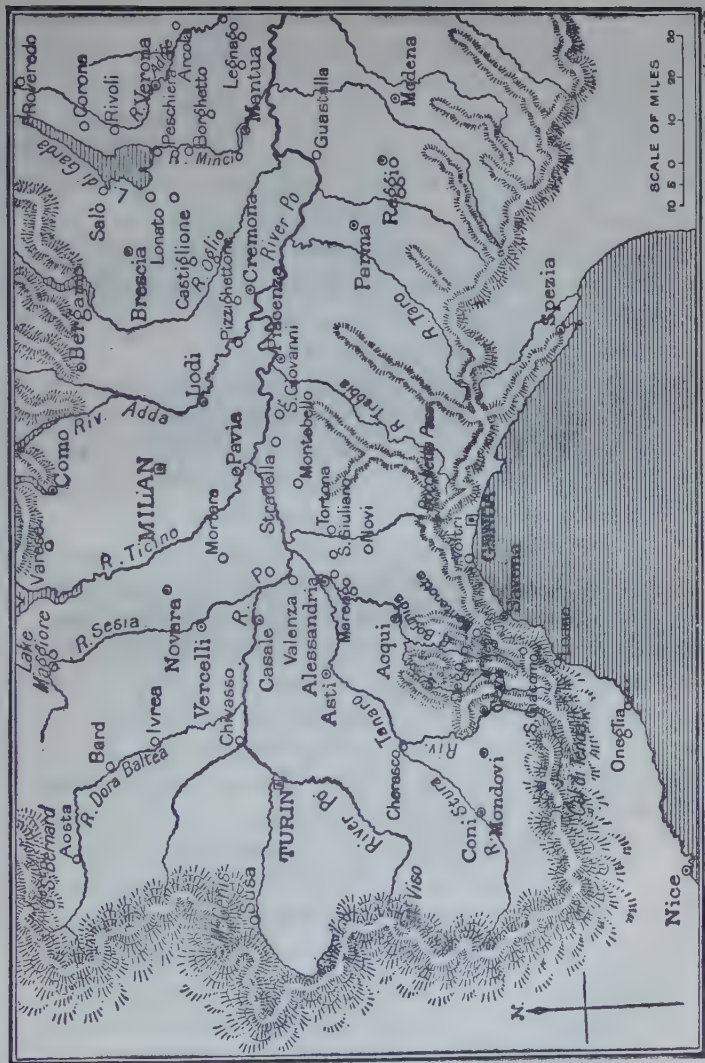
In strategy: prompt advance in as great force as possible along the best line of operations; or, in other words, the adoption of a strategic offensive in the swiftest and most effective manner. In tactics: concentration of masses against the enemy's weak point.

Strategy, that is, the conduct of war in its large outlines, and especially the choice of a line of operations, determines the whole course of a campaign. It is therefore more important than tactics, the art of arranging and handling troops on the battlefield.¹ Many commanders, for instance, Ney and Blücher, have fought battles well on the ordinary lines, but have lacked the imagination, the grip on the principles of war, the topographical instinct, needed by the strategist. His brain must, as it were, mirror the scene of the campaign and the positions of his own and of the enemy's forces, so far as he knows the latter. As Napoleon said: "A general's mind must in respect of lucidity and clearness resemble the lens of a telescope and never create any mirage." Further, the commander needs to estimate at their true value the obstacles in the way of either army, seeking how he may avoid them and make them a danger to his opponents. The fertility or otherwise of the country along his line of advance, and the temper of the inhabitants must also engage his attention; and last, but not least, the opportunities for forming and

¹ See Jomini, "Précis de l'Art de Guerre," pp. 220-4, for suggestive remarks on this.

utilizing depots, or magazines, for the supply of his army will be his constant care. It follows that a faulty choice of a line of operations at the outset vitiates the whole campaign. A piece or two may be taken; but the opposing king will not be checkmated.

The most surprising, perhaps even the finest, example of Napoleon's grasp of the principles of strategy is his first campaign, that of 1796. The conclusion of peace with Spain made it possible to open the campaign in North Italy with the vigorous offensive at which he always aimed. The discords between the Austrians and Sardinians, their weariness of war, the discontent of the Italians with Hapsburg rule, the fertility of the North Italian plain, the difficulty of maintaining a tame defensive on the war-swept Italian Riviera, and the impossibility of Austria speedily succouring her forces in Italy, all these considerations entered into his decision. Holding that Riviera as far east as Savona, he planned an invasion of Piedmont through the pass north of that town, because there he could, as it were, strike off the point of the capital letter V which represented the positions and lines of communication of the Allies. The Sardinians held the road leading north-west towards their capital, Turin: the Austrians, that leading north-east down the valley of the Bormida towards Milan and Mantua, their sources of supply. In September 1794, at the Battle of Dego, experience had shown that the Sardinians would not move away eastwards across the intervening hump of mountains to help their Allies beaten in the valley of the Bormida. It was fairly



MAP TO ILLUSTRATE THE CAMPAIGNS IN NORTH ITALY

London. Stanford's Geographical Atlas.

certain that in a parallel case the Austrians would be equally unchivalrous. Disunion, and therefore disaster, must be the result; and Bonaparte, mastering the problem in some lodging at Paris, clearly foresaw the surrender of Sardinia and the ruin of Austria in her Italian domains. Nothing is more remarkable in all his career than the foresight with which he discerned the advantages of the French invaders, the disadvantages of the Austrian defenders, so soon as the point of the allied wedge was struck off. Quite correctly he saw that Austria could not stem the tide of invasion save under the walls of Mantua. That stronghold blockaded, the French could hew their way through to Tyrol, provided that their comrades in Swabia showed the same masterful energy.

This plan was not a mere brilliant improvisation. In part, at least, it rested on a study of the movements of the French marshal, de Maillebois, on the same theatre of war in 1745; and he took with him Pezay's account of that campaign. But he improved on his original.¹ For, starting from the Riviera, Maillebois divided his forces, invading the basin of the Po in two columns some seventy miles apart, and, far from separating the Austro-Sardinian forces, caused them to unite. The dispersion of the attacking columns over so great an extent of country, especially mountainous country, was a radical defect, which no tactical successes could cure; and Maillebois effected little,

¹ I cannot agree with Pierron's article in the "*Journal des Sciences militaires*" (November 1888), and agree with the reply to him in the month of March 1889.

even against a weak defensive. On the other hand, Bonaparte acted on the maxim that "an army ought to have but one line of operation which should be carefully preserved, and abandoned only as the result of weightier and overbearing considerations." By massing his forces in the pass north of Savona and promptly advancing, he defeated the Allies in detail, drove them back along divergent lines of retreat, and speedily compelled Sardinia to sue for peace.

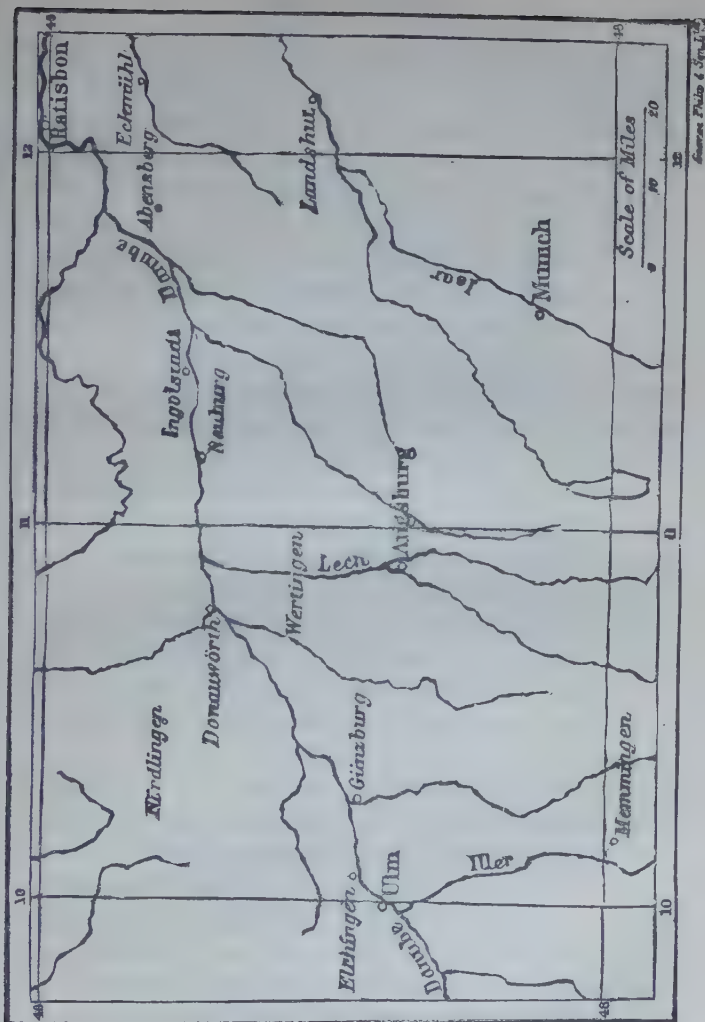
This advantage enabled him to gain possession of Coni and secure a shorter line of communication with France, namely, that over the Col di Tenda, which was free from the harassing attacks of Nelson's cruisers. Thus, in sixteen days he crushed Sardinia, rendered Britain's Sea Power almost useless in that quarter, and left Austria no great stronghold but Mantua for the defence of her Italian domains. It is worth noting that the attainment of these brilliant results depended on speed at the outset. If Bonaparte had been a week later in meeting the Allies, they could have united at the point of the V, that is, in the pass above Savona; and, with the advantages both of number and position on their side, might well have pushed him back into that narrow strip of coast, where Nelson would have harassed his flank and cut off supplies. Promptitude brought victory; slackness involved disaster. One of Napoleon's Saxon admirers, Colonel von Odeleben, described his military science in these words: "For the execution of a plan which he had conceived on an extensive scale, and which he had carefully weighed, he chose with a firm and in-

flexible will the means which should conduct him in the quickest and most vigorous manner to his aim."¹ There is no example better than this first campaign. At St. Helena he commented on the fact that Caesar was at his best even in his first recorded battle; and the same may be said of Napoleon.

Of the strategic combinations of his middle years that which led to the Austrian disaster at Ulm is the most striking. The problem confronting him was as follows. In the early days of August 1805 he still contemplated the possibility of invading England with the splendid army concentrated near Boulogne; but, finding his naval schemes miscarry, he defined more clearly an alternative plan, which must for some little time have been in his thoughts.² Austria and Russia, angered by his annexation of Genoa, were entering the field as allies of Great Britain. A large Austrian army, under the Archduke Ferdinand and General Mack, crossed the River Inn on 8th September and invaded Bavaria, hoping to surprise the Bavarians, now the avowed friends of France. Failing in this, Mack occupied Ulm on the Upper Danube, and Memmingen further south, on the River Iller (23rd September). There he awaited the arrival of 55,000 Russians, who were not due to arrive at the River Inn, some 140 English miles further east, until 20th October. In point of fact, the Archduke Charles, who drew up the plan of campaign, designed to strike the chief blows in Italy, Ferdinand and Mack re-

¹ Von Odeleben, "Campaign in Saxony" (Eng. edit.), p. 41.

² Rose, "Pitt and Napoleon: Essays and Letters," pp. 142-4.



maining on the defensive in Swabia until the Russians came up. Evidently Charles counted on the continued quiescence of the French at Boulogne; and up to nearly the end of August his hopes seemed justified. But clearly the position was one of peril if Napoleon should resolve to strike a blow at the Austrians on the Upper Danube; and no campaign shows more clearly the danger of framing a faulty plan of operations, and mistaking wishes for facts. In warfare, as in all spheres of action, imagination is a useful servant, but it must always be held in subordination to reason; and reason should ever be at work on all the facts available.

In those days, of course, the acquisition of news was slow and difficult. Even the semaphore telegraph worked slowly; but Napoleon had the advantage of it both at Boulogne and Paris, while the Austrians in hostile Bavaria were without good means of getting news. Even so, if Ferdinand and Mack had scouted vigorously in all directions and kept their minds free from the dominating assumption just named, they would have escaped disaster.

Herein lay the difference between them and Napoleon. In 1805, as in all his best campaigns, the Emperor kept his mind open to every fragment of evidence. He had before him one general conception, that of beating the Austrians before the Russians came up. But the assertion that, even at Boulogne, he resolved on all the stages of the grand march from that seaport to Ulm, where Mack was to be swallowed up, is sheer nonsense. The report was widely circu-

lated by indiscreet devotees, and deceived Thiers,¹ but Napoleon's Correspondence shows that not until 13th September, that is, fourteen days after breaking up his camp at Boulogne, did he know for certain whether the Austrians had crossed the River Inn. Only after receipt of advices from all his corps leaders—and they were urged to send them twice or thrice a day in critical times—did he call for maps, and, lying down, measure distances with compasses, insert pins, and then deduce new calculations. Thus his plans developed only in proportion as he knew the circumstances of the case. At this period his masterful will worked within the ever-widening circle of ascertainable fact.

Up to 16th or 17th September his chief aim was to hurry on all his corps into Swabia in order to rescue the South German forces from the grip of Austria. On the 17th he ordered the corps of Ney and Lannes to march by lengthy stages, arriving at Ulm on 9th October; for he did not as yet know that Mack was nearing that very city. News to that effect did not reach him at St. Cloud until 20th September; but at

¹ Thiers says that, turning from the ocean to the Continent, "he dictated during several hours, with extraordinary coolness and precision the plan . . . of the immortal campaign of 1805." Dupin ("*Voyages dans la Grande Bretagne*," vol. i, p. 244) says that Napoleon, while still in a violent rage, "unhesitatingly, without a pause, dictated the whole of the campaign of Austerlitz," foreseeing everything, so that the plan was followed exactly as far as Munich; and even beyond "the time alone underwent some alteration." Méneval ("*Méms.*," i, 408) distrusted the story.

once he issued revised orders, which clearly had in view a great turning movement. Two or three days later, in a hasty note, he outlined the stages by which his six corps were by 17th October to occupy Ratisbon, Dietfurt, Ingolstadt, and Neuburg. This was merely a general sketch, based on the assumption that Mack would retreat; but when he found him to be lingering at Ulm, he proceeded to draw in his nets more closely, and on the 27th expressed to Bernadotte the hope that the turning movements entrusted to him and Marmont would lead to Mack's destruction.

This confidence was not excessive; for he knew Mack to be a vain and over-confident commander, who with insufficient forces had plunged deep into hostile territory and was now out of reach of help from the Russians. The river valleys favoured the movements of the French and brought them easily to the enemy's rear. Finally the French army numbered 187,000 men, and, when joined by 28,000 South Germans, was nearly three times the strength of the Austrians. Having this enormous superiority of force, he could venture on the final enveloping moves, sending round his men in masses behind a moving screen of cavalry. In no campaign have horsemen done more efficient work; and it is worth noting that this was the first of Napoleon's campaigns in which he made the best possible use of cavalry. An artilleryman in 1793, he mastered infantry tactics in Italy, and now in Swabia showed the like ability with cavalry, Murat being a brilliant executant. Perplex-

ing the enemy in front, flank, and rear, the French horse left Mack in doubt where the chief blow would fall; and to them the final triumph may in large measure be ascribed.

Up to 10th October it was possible that Mack would draw off southwards from Ulm to Memmingen and thence escape to Tyrol by the valley of the Iller. That was by far the safest course; but Mack knew so little of the French movements that he attempted to break away down the Danube to the north-east. He gained a small success, but Napoleon hurried up Ney's corps, which by a daring and successful attack on Elchingen completed the ring now closing in on the doomed army. On the same day (14th October) Soult captured Memmingen; and all the French, except those told off to oppose the Russians, advanced on Ulm, thereby compelling nearly the whole of Mack's army to surrender (17th to 20th October). With comparatively small losses Napoleon engulfed an army of some 70,000 men.

This astonishing result was due to the incisive strategy of Napoleon, the defective plan of campaign of his enemies, and to Mack's inability to weigh evidence. Only on this occasion did the Emperor attempt the widely enveloping moves so often attempted by the Austrians in 1796; and now, only because he rightly judged Mack to be a man on whom he could safely perform this otherwise risky experiment. The disparity of forces, the lie of the land, which favoured an incursion from the north-west, the character of the Austrian commander, and the mag-

nitude of the prize within reach, justified this daring strategy, which ranks as the most brilliant and triumphant effort of Napoleon's genius.

Not the least remarkable proof of his confidence in the final result is found in the bulletin, issued at Noerdlingen on 7th October, ten days before the triumphant finale. In it he pointed out to his troops that by their grand turning movement they had avoided the barrier of the Black Forest, and all possible attacks from the side of Tyrol, and were now in the rear of the enemy, who had no time to lose if he was to escape utter ruin. If the date of this bulletin be correct, it supplies a curious proof of Napoleon's desire to inspire his men to the highest degree of hardihood. The troops had to endure long marches, often amidst heavy rains, and with entire uncertainty as to food at the end of the day. In reply to Marmont's complaints on this last score Berthier made these significant remarks: "In all his letters General Marmont is always referring to the commissariat. I repeat that in the war of invasion and of rapid movement which the Emperor is waging there can be no depots; and the commanding generals have themselves to see to it that they procure the necessary supplies from the countries which they traverse." Herein lay one cause of Napoleon's triumph at Ulm. On urgent occasions he neglected the salutary and almost essential rule of providing depots of stores, and compelled his men to live from hand to mouth. Of course this involved a terrible strain on the troops, and led to marauding habits which ultimately turned

the peoples of Europe against Napoleon. But, for the present, the speed which he gained during the critical days of October 1805 assured the ruin of Austria and of the Third Coalition.

As an example of tactical successes due to a masterly strategic conception, Napoleon's movements on the upper Danube, near Ratisbon, deserve careful study. He himself was very proud of this episode in his career, referring to the Battle of Eckmühl (22nd April 1809) as the finest of his efforts. This is somewhat curious; for it was an exceedingly confused conflict; the number of the enemy actually engaged did not equal that of the French; while the material results were by no means great. Probably Napoleon singled it out as the most prominent incident in the five days of fighting (19th-23rd April), and intended to refer to them as a whole. Indeed, they illustrate in a striking way a problem which he declared to be one of the most difficult of the warrior's art, the passing from the defensive to the offensive. Equally noteworthy are they as revealing the close connection between strategy and tactics in the conception of one who was a master of both. Finally they show the supreme importance of securing the initiative early in a campaign and of keeping it, thereby compelling the enemy to fight where and how you will, not as he wills.

At the beginning of the campaign of 1809, the Austrians, as in 1805, invaded the territory of Napoleon's ally, Bavaria, somewhat earlier than he expected. They therefore gained initial advantages, at

and near Ratisbon, which might have been far greater had the Archduke Charles made use of the shorter line of advance, that from the mountains of Bohemia. Owing to a lack of determination that blighted an otherwise brilliant career, Charles finally advanced by the longer route south of the Danube and thus failed to gain a decisive success over the widely scattered forces of the French. At that time, early in April, Berthier, commanding in the temporary absence of the Emperor, proved himself unequal to the emergency. Misunderstanding the instructions from Paris, and confused by the Austrian onset, he left the French corps so far isolated as to court disaster. It is, indeed, most curious that, after being at Napoleon's right hand since 1796, he should not have mastered the art of concentrating an army at the most important point, or along the line most suited for advance. Jomini passes judgement that "in his twenty campaigns he (Berthier) had failed to grasp the very first principles of strategy." These vacillations and mistakes probably resulted from loss of nerve. Berthier's aide-de-camp, Lejeune, describes him as trembling and bending under the weight of responsibility, and during four days and nights riding to and fro along the triangle, Augsburg, Ingolstadt, Donauwörth. He might well tremble. He had ordered Davout with the strongest corps to hold Ratisbon, though a large part of the French army was left scattered about Augsburg nearly eighty miles away, and while the Archduke with 90,000 men was marching on Landshut, a town on the River Isar, north-east of Munich. Thus,

Berthier had left an immense gap between Davout and the French corps disseminated over and beyond the large triangular space named above. Charles, by persevering with his western forward movement, could easily thrust a wedge into the gap, and, turning on the enemy's corps, beat them in detail.

Such was the position on 17th April when Napoleon, hurrying to the front, arrived at Donauwörth. He at once saw the urgency of the crisis and took steps to call together his scattered troops, ordering Davout to fall back at once towards Ingolstadt, and the other French corps to advance with the utmost possible speed, so as to form a united body near that town and along the little River Alm south of it. Again the quickness of the French and the slowness of the enemy soon altered the situation. In the middle of April the Archduke Charles, could he have known it, had the game in his hands; but he lost his opportunity. Napoleon, hurrying up Masséna from the south-west with that immortal message: *Activité, activité, vitesse, je me recommande à vous*—was able to attack with every advantage of position on his side. For meanwhile the Archduke Charles had decided to diverge northwards from Landshut in order to seize Ratisbon, a move which assured his connections with Bohemia and secured the support of two corps marching from that quarter. For these reasons the plan had much to commend it, especially if he could catch Davout; but it had the disadvantage of losing him the initiative on his front and of exposing his flank to Napoleon. On hearing this glad news, the Emperor drew himself up,

and with flashing eye exclaimed: "Then I have them. Their army is lost. We shall be at Vienna in a month."¹

Napoleon now promptly seized the initiative which is of decisive importance in war. Meanwhile the Austrians, spread out on an outer arc, were executing that perilous movement, a flank march in front of an unbeaten and rapidly concentrating enemy. If the Archduke had postponed that operation until he had beaten the enemy's corps to the west, he might have attained his end with little risk. As it was, he lost all his earlier advantages of position, which Napoleon promptly secured. Even on 20th April the French and their Allies were inferior to the enemy by about 110,000 to 140,000; but their concentration and the dissemination of the Austrians virtually decided the campaign. Moving on interior and therefore shorter lines (as in 1814 in the series of battles begun at Montmirail) the Emperor overpowered the enemy in detail; and only by the speedy capture of Ratisbon from its small garrison did Charles save himself from destruction.

Admiration of Napoleon's skill need not be much lessened by a perception of the mistakes of the Archduke Charles; for the greatest general is he who quickly detects and as quickly punishes his antagonist when committed to faulty courses. It is also fair to remember that Berthier's rash order to Davout to occupy Ratisbon was one cause of the Archduke's divergence northwards, and therefore of his exposing

¹ Ségur, "Histoires et Mémoires," iii, 321.

himself to the prompt punishment inflicted by Napoleon. Possibly this was the reason why the Emperor treated his Chief-of-Staff with all possible lenience. Berthier was not only an excellent foil to Napoleon; but his chief blunder had contributed to his master's crowning triumph.

Defects have been pointed out in Napoleon's movements during these critical days. The French general, Bonnal,¹ accuses him of letting slip at the outset a great opportunity of destroying the Austrians owing to obsession by the overmastering idea of cutting off their communications with Vienna at Landshut. Much can be said in support of this charge. It is also true that, overrating his successes in front of Ratisbon, he failed to order a final advance of his wearied troops which would have driven the enemy into the Danube. The Archduke was therefore able to draw off his troops across the river and retreat safely towards Bohemia. But, even allowing that these five days of fighting were not perfect, they completely altered the situation, rescuing scattered forces from great danger, and transforming them into a solid mass, which drove aside a hitherto successful army, and gained control over the most practicable road to Vienna. The five victories and the undisputed march on the enemy's capital were in the last resort the outcome of superior strategy and unflinching confidence.

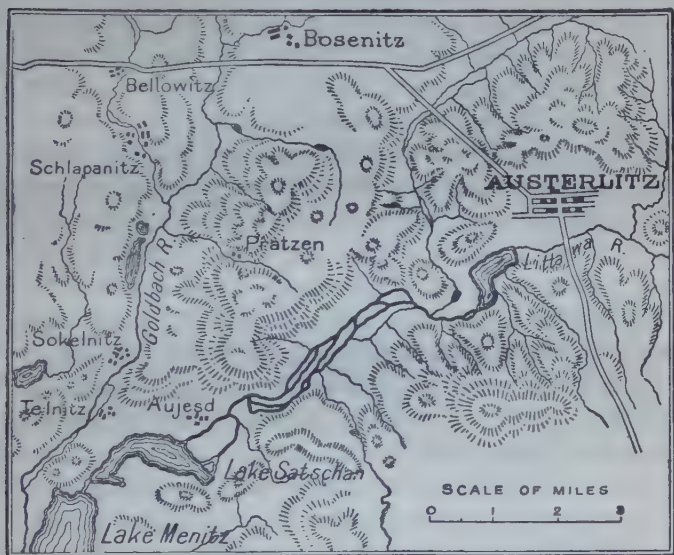
Passing from strategy to tactics, we are confronted by a bewildering wealth of examples. Austerlitz is

¹ Bonnal, "La Manœuvre de Landshut."

the most perfect of the Napoleonic battles; and, though it has been so often described, I can find no other which outlines so clearly the conceptions of the master. The position on the 1st December 1805, the eve of the battle, was as follows:—Napoleon, realizing the danger of his position, 800 miles away from France, opposed by the hitherto unbeaten forces of Russia and the relics of those of Austria, resolved to bring the campaign to a decisive issue before Prussia declared against him and cut his communications. He had therefore assumed an unusual tone of moderation, and sent proposals for peace to the Czar Alexander, which led to no result except to inspire that impressionable young ruler with undue confidence. The French, falling back before the allied advance, occupied gently rising ground behind the Goldbach and in front of the town of Brunn. Thither Napoleon called up all available troops, in accordance with his maxim: "Before a battle concentrate all your forces; neglect none; one battalion often decides the day." One small corps, that of Davout, may be said to have decided Austerlitz. Napoleon called it up from Vienna; and, after covering ninety miles in forty-eight hours, the 11,000 heroes of Davout arrived on the eve of the battle, prolonging the French line to the right, or south, at the point where the hardest fighting was to take place.

Napoleon, carefully surveying the field, discerned by an intuition of genius the plan which his over-confident enemies would almost certainly adopt, that of cutting him off from his immediate base of supplies,

Vienna. True, he had another and shorter way of communicating with France, namely, through Brünn, Klattau, and Ratisbon; but he rightly judged that the Allies would seek to turn his right wing so as to edge him off into the hills on the north where the Prussian



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advance would complete his discomfiture. The Allies should have been wary of attempting this turning movement; for it brought their left wing before two artificial lakes, those of Satschan and Mönitz; and three villages would have to be carried before the hoped for result was attained. Weyrother, the originator of this perilous scheme, underestimated

alike the genius of Napoleon, the strength of the French, and the danger of the move. The plan was drawn up before the arrival of Davout nearly equalized the two armies. Napoleon now had some 70,000 men as against about 80,000 of the Allies. His plan of battle, which consisted in a defensive on his left and right wings and an offensive at the centre, enabled him to mass his men. The more he "refused" with his right wing, the more he concentrated on interior lines. The more the Allies gained ground on that side, the more they extended their array along an outer arc, thereby weakening the centre. Thus, in tactics Napoleon followed the same general law which guided his strategic combinations. He knew that Davout's wearied men would fight a losing game stubbornly, while the French centre, comprising the corps of Soult and Bernadotte, stormed the crest of the Pratzenberg, the plateau occupied by the allied centre. Here, obviously, was the key of the Austro-Russian position; but the Allies were so intent on working round Napoleon's left flank as to despatch in all about 40,000 men against less than 12,000 under Davout. Consequently, at the centre, the Russian General Kutusoff had no more than 17,000 infantry, with a large corps of Austrians under Liechtenstein supporting him on the north. The crest of the plateau should have been strongly defended by artillery to beat off a French attack; but the Allies made little use of their superiority in this arm. Jomini assigns to them 330 cannon; but certainly far fewer came into action, perhaps because of the large number sent with the dense column

attacking Napoleon's right. There in that marshy ground they were of little use, and were easily captured at the end of the day.

So soon as we realize the faulty dispositions of the Allies, and the resolve of Napoleon to profit by them to the utmost, the course of events can be seen as by a bird's-eye. Imagination pictures the gaps in the allied line especially at the centre, the wheeling forward at dawn of its left wing from the central hump of the Pratzenberg, the stout resistance of Davout in and about the villages of Telnitz and Sokelnitz; while further north at the French centre, the serried masses of two whole corps move against the slopes of the Pratzenberg, breast them with comparatively little opposition, and at the summit find only about half their number of defenders. Further north on the lower ground, Lannes and Bagration fight throughout the day an almost equal conflict. First on the Pratzenberg do the French win a decisive success. Despite the strenuous efforts of brave old Kutusoff, Soult and Bernadotte push back the defenders. The counter-attacks of the Russians are stoutly repelled. A last desperate effort by the Grand Duke Constantine at the head of the Russian Guards fails to retrieve matters. The arrival of the French Imperial Guards assures a complete triumph on the Pratzenberg; and a headlong charge by Marshal Bessières and the Cavalry of the Guard drives the wreck of the allied centre in utter rout back on the village of Austerlitz.

The position of their left wing is now beyond all hope. The messages to recall it come too late; the

victorious French easily cut it off from the Pratzenberg and edge it back towards the lakes and the marshy ground between. Marbot's story of thousands of Russians sinking slowly beneath the ice is one of the picturesque legends which lend vivacity to French memoirs of this period; but the reality was terrible enough. A few men of that devoted left wing were drowned, very many more were cut off in the villages they had captured, but most were slain or captured by the cavalry. The losses of the Allies amounted to 30,000 men and 186 guns, the outcome of a faulty conception which played into the hands of a genius.

A proof of the unfailing vivacity of Napoleon's brain is the variety and freshness of his dicta on the art of war. Here are some of them:

"The first quality of a soldier is fortitude in enduring fatigue and hardship; bravery is the second. Poverty, hardship and misery are the school of the good soldier. . . ."

"Soldiers must in all ways be encouraged to remain with the colours: this you will attain by showing great esteem for soldiers."

"An army is a people that obeys."

"Never attack a position in front which may be taken by turning."¹

"The junction of different corps should never be effected in the vicinity of the foe."

¹ It is needless to say that Napoleon often broke this rule.

"At the commencement of a campaign thought should be expended as to whether an advance should be made or not; but when once the offensive has been assumed it should be maintained to the last extremity."¹

"The strength of an army, like the amount of momentum in mechanics, is estimated by the mass multiplied by the velocity. A swift march enhances the *morale* of the army and increases its power for victory."

"Men must be led by an iron hand in a velvet glove."

"Courage is like love: it feeds on hope."

"In war all is mental; and the mind and opinion make up more than the half of the actual."

"The art of war is an immense study which comprises all others."

As Napoleon brought all the powers of his mind to bear upon the problems of war, and was admittedly the greatest warrior of all time, the question naturally arises—Why was he ever beaten? The question would take long to answer. It must suffice to say, firstly, that the results of war are less permanent now than in former ages, because in the modern world nations are awake, highly organized, and not mere raw material for the exploits of heroes;

¹ 1809 is an example of the right use of this principle; 1812 of its abuse.

secondly, this awakening and organization went on very rapidly in Napoleon's time owing to the weight of his blows, the marauding habits of his troops during his triumphant rushes, and the skill with which he organized France and her vassal States. Thanks to Stein, Scharnhorst and others, Central Europe renewed its youth and turned his weapons against him; armed nations confronted *la grande nation*; and myriads of men, determined to conquer or die, contested his supremacy from Cadiz to Moscow. Their resolve became the more fixed as the enthusiasm of the French waned. In short, by the year 1812 Napoleon had burnt up that enthusiasm. He once said: "I have an income of 100,000 men." During ten years he lived up to that income, and in 1812, 1813 he far exceeded it. After the frightful waste of his wars up to Wagram and Torres Vedras he had at his disposal raw recruits, not veterans. Even so he accomplished wonders; but keen-sighted observers saw the end approaching unless he gave up the impossible task of dominating Europe, and allowed weary France to recuperate. This wise passivity was alien to his nature. Unlike Frederick the Great, who in his later years safeguarded his conquests by a policy of extreme moderation, Napoleon could not or would not rest. Here lay the fundamental cause of his ruin, that both as statesman and warrior he could not see when it was time to stop.

The Peninsular War might have been closed had he recalled Joseph Bonaparte and sent back Ferdinand VII to Madrid. But he scorned to do so, even in

1813, when he needed every man. At the close of that campaign, he confessed that it was a signal blunder to have sacrificed many thousands of Frenchmen in order to force Joseph on the Spaniards, and that now he would just as soon see Ferdinand at Madrid as Joseph; for Spain was a natural ally of France.¹ On this question wisdom came to him only after he had lost a quarter of a million of men.

What, again, are we to say of his attempting to subdue Russia while the Spanish war drained away his resources? In June 1812, when he held his Court at Dresden before vassal kings, the French admiral, Decrès, remarked to Pasquier that Napoleon would never again inhabit Paris.—“What!” said Pasquier, “will he make Moscow or St. Petersburg his capital?”—“He will not long have any capital (came the reply): he will not return from this war; or if he returns, it will be without his army.”² This prophecy is all the more significant because Decrès fathomed Napoleon’s plans for the invasion of England in 1803-5 and realized the fearful risks of that enterprise. Fortunately for France, Nelson intervened, just as Sir Sidney Smith at Acre blotted out the oriental dreams of the year 1799. In 1812 nothing stopped Napoleon until he reached Moscow.

Self-confidence is a valuable gift. In April 1809 it

¹ Roederer, “Journal,” p. 323.

² N. Senior, “Conversations with Thiers, etc.,” i, 251. In 1854 Thiers said that Napoleon’s ruin was certain from the year 1808 (N. Senior, “Conversations with Thiers,” i, 250). I date it from 1812, because Napoleon could have closed the Spanish War before he undertook the Russian Campaign.

helped Napoleon signally to turn the tables on the Archduke Charles. But after 1809 self-confidence degenerated into rashness and an unmeasured contempt of his enemies. Perhaps this defect was accentuated by the marriage with Marie Louise, which increased the tendency towards megalomania. Certain it is that in the campaign of 1812 he set at defiance the dictates of prudence. To invade that vast territory without having any sure base of operations was highly dangerous. After occupying Smolensk on 17th August, he considered, only to reject it, the alternative course of his advanced guard wintering there, with friendly Lithuania close at hand; then in the spring of 1813 he could resume the march either on Moscow or St. Petersburg as occasion might offer. Such were his projects. Now, what were the facts of the situation? Already in the advance to Smolensk he had lost about 120,000 men, far more by disease or marauding than in regular battles; and it was clear that Barclay relied on Fabian tactics to wear down the Grand Army. Nevertheless, so much did Napoleon rely on prestige that he resolved to press on, and, after a decisive victory, dictate peace at Moscow. That is, he argued as though he were in Austria or Prussia, warring against a highly organized State.¹

In reality he was fighting an amorphous or almost amoebic organism, which had no heart and scarcely any ganglia. Russia lived in her myriads of villages, which, with their *Mirs* (village Communes) existed much as usual despite the military wedge which he

¹ Jomini, p. 357.

had driven in as far as Moscow. During his stay of five weeks at the old capital of Russia the scales did not fall from his eyes. With an indomitable resolve, which would be sublime were it not tinged with madness, he occupied the middle days of October with working out a plan to march on St. Petersburg and there dictate the peace which Alexander refused to concede to him at Moscow. This delay was fatal. The statement that the horrors of the retreat were due to the rigours of an exceptionally early winter is no less superficial than false. No sharp frost set in until 8th November, that is, eighteen days after he began his retreat. If, instead of drawing up impossible plans at Moscow, he had set out early in October, he would have saved most of his troops. His inability to break through the Russians who barred the south-west road at Malojaloslavitz, compelled him to retreat by his own devastated line of advance, while the grip of winter completed the miseries of the marauding bands into which the Grand Army had now dissolved. Shall we blame the winter for all this? Nay, rather let us blame the man, formerly endowed with keen foresight, who now omitted to take "General Winter" into account.

Both in Russia and in Spain he was waging war not merely against armies but against nations, nay more, against the forces of nature. Strange to say, this once diligent student of history and geography ignored their teachings in his later wars. No invader has conquered the Russians in the heart of their empire; neither has any Land Power long held down

Spain. True, the Carthaginians, the Romans, the Moors, having command of the Mediterranean, conquered all, or nearly all, that peninsula. The Visigoths and the French, seeking to dominate it from Toulouse, failed. This lesson was lost upon Napoleon, even though the British fleet was now at hand to succour the Spanish and Portuguese patriots or threaten the French flanks. Surely, if Charlemagne and the kings of France failed to conquer and keep Spain, when no great navy helped her, even Napoleon could not hope to achieve that task, when he had against him nearly all the population, formed in several armies and numerous guerilla bands, assisted also by Wellington's army and the British navy. A glance at the map of Spain, ridged by five mountain chains and bristling with the rough lands of the north, shows the extreme difficulty of the enterprise. In such a land victories over the ill-trained defenders did not imply conquest. In fact, as Marshal Jourdan said, the more the French gained ground, the greater became their losses, the more dangerous their position; and when, as in 1810-11, the French held Wellington and the chief Spanish armies at the further edge, the difficulties reached their climax. In the year 1812 Napoleon should have bowed to the inevitable, and, at most, have limited his aim to the occupation of the provinces north of the Ebro. His pride forbade this salutary step; and his overgrown Empire snapped asunder under the double strain to which he subjected it both in Spain and Russia.¹

¹ See Jomini, p. 77, on the danger of a double war.

Despite the disasters of 1812 he clung to his Continental System; and that implied the domination of Germany. Excess of confidence again marred his prospects in the latter part of the campaign of 1813. The Saxon colonel, von Odeleben, describes him as brushing aside every piece of advice contrary to his prepossessions and meeting every argument as to the impossibility of any scheme with the ironical words: "Ah! on ne peut pas." In fact, he clung to his resolve until impossibility stared him in the face.¹

I judge this campaign to be his worst, because, after the accession of Austria to the ranks of his enemies, concentration along some line, where she could not threaten his rear, was obviously necessary. Or, if he continued to hold the long line of the Elbe from Hamburg to Dresden, entrenched camps were needed to block the chief roads by which the Allies could advance from the mountains of Bohemia, and threaten his communications with France. He did not even draw in his troops from Silesia and other outlying positions, and thus left the Allies, acting behind that mountain screen, free to threaten his rear. True, he beat them off at Dresden, his last great victory, but he lost the fruits of that triumph in a fit of lethargy afterwards, which perhaps accounts for the vague orders for the pursuit and the consequent loss of Vandamme's corps in the defile of Kulm. Three further defeats of strong French corps under his lieutenants failed to arouse him to the danger of his position along the line of the Elbe. Now and again he even

¹ Von Odeleben, "Campaign in Saxony" (Eng. edit.), p. 41.

reverted to the plan of seizing Berlin and rescuing his garrisons on the Oder, unconscious of the net that the Allies were beginning to draw round him. At times, as after hearing of Ney's defeat at Dennewitz, he thought of withdrawing all his troops westward as far as Erfurt; but during days and weeks of vacillation or spasmodic activity he neglected to do so, and finally had to abandon St Cyr's corps at Dresden, while with his remaining forces he concentrated on Leipzig. There he was beaten, a fact largely due to his omission to call up St. Cyr in time.

This is not the Napoleon of the days of Rivoli, Ulm, Jena. His pugnacity and will-power are undiminished; but his foresight is at fault; and worst of all his brain fails to weigh evidence aright. He regards as true only that which harmonizes with his own conceptions, so Marmont observes.¹ He lets the vision of a triumphant entry into Berlin warp his judgement; he vehemently upbraids his lieutenants for their defeats, failing to realize that their ranks are full of weary boys, and that Prussia has produced a great strategist, Gneisenau, and a fighting general, Blücher. It was the good fortune of Napoleon in his early years never to meet an antagonist worthy of his steel. Hence that ingrained feeling of contempt for his enemy, which for a time wrought wonders in Italy, Swabia and Moravia, but led to the disasters of the later years.

Limits of time preclude an adequate examination of the Waterloo campaign. It must suffice to say that

¹ Marmont, "Méms.," v, 281.

the Emperor's plan was here both bold and sound, namely, to mass his troops on a line which would enable him to drive Blücher and Wellington far apart. In essentials, then, it resembles the beginning of his first Italian campaign. Possibly the tenacious mind clung to the memory of those bright days, and believed that the Allies, once severed, would not reunite. Certain it is that after defeating the Prussians at Ligny, he believed he had disposed of them for fully a week. This explains his tardy plan of pursuit and his refusal, during the early part of the fight at Waterloo, to believe that they could be marching in force against his right flank. At the outset he did not know that they had been strengthened by the arrival of Bülow's corps of 31,000 men late on the previous evening. But he should have allowed some margin for unforeseen occurrences favourable to the enemy, seeing that their troops were known to be concentrating. This allowance he failed to make. He believed that they had lost at and after Ligny as many as 45,000 men in killed, wounded, and deserters. Probably up to about 4 p.m. he deemed the Prussian attack on his right flank to be only that of Bülow's corps, as was stated by a Prussian prisoner.

Further, he fought the battle against Wellington carelessly, assured that it was the affair of a *déjeuner*. He always despised the Duke, and he did not observe that hidden source of strength of the British position, that it concealed the second line and reserves. He also permitted far too many troops to be expended on Hougomont; he allowed d'Erlon's

corps to charge in a formation far too dense for so early a period in the fight; and finally he let his cavalry be wasted in the glorious but ineffective charges of 4-6 p.m. At a later period he blamed Ney and others for those charges; but it is certain that at that time he believed his cavalry had won the British position and only needed a final charge by Kellermann's cuirassiers to secure a decisive triumph. He therefore (as he stated at St. Helena) ordered Kellermann to advance "as if for the pursuit of the English army."¹ The responsibility for the last onset of the French horse therefore rests on him.

During part of this phase of the battle his attention was distracted by the Prussian flank attack; but, after beating it off, as he believed, he devoted all his strength to breaking Wellington's right centre, when, in view of the uncertainties of the situation, he should have fought a defensive fight, or even drawn off altogether. This step, however, was contrary to his instincts, which always bade him push on an attack to the utmost. He therefore staked all on the supposition that Grouchy would arrive and take the Prussians in the rear. Grouchy was greatly to blame, as Mr. Ropes has abundantly proved; but for the Emperor to trust everything to the discernment of a cavalry general, who had never before held an independent command, was a grave error of judgement. As is well known, Napoleon sent in his last reserves of the

¹ "Nap. Corresp.," xxxi, 194. See Rose, "Pitt and Napoleon: Essays and Letters," pp. 186-96, for further details.

Guard against Wellington's right centre. That magnificent effort met with an equally staunch resistance; and a final advance of the allied line swept all before it.

Thus ended Napoleon's military career. I have striven to point out the personal causes which led to the disaster. They may perhaps be described as hardening of the brain. That once splendid organism, which acted as a perfect lens, a true balancer of alternatives, and a swift framer of resolves, now retained the last faculty, even in an exaggerated form, but it distorted events so as to fit in with desires, and registered fancies as facts. This deterioration has happened to several great warriors. It grew on Napoleon rapidly after Tilsit, still more so after the Austrian campaign of 1809. The increase of his Empire in the year 1810 is a sign of the megalomania which both enlarged his responsibilities and impaired his faculty for meeting them aright. Some persons have ascribed his fall to failing health. After examining that question with some care, especially for the year 1815, I conclude that his bodily powers were but slightly impaired. That is also the conclusion of Thiers and Houssaye.¹ His activity both before and after Waterloo was that of a man in good health. It was the judgement that had degenerated; and as he himself had said: "In war all is mental."

A comparison between him and Wellington is inevitable, but cannot be instituted in detail. The two men moved on different planes, which intersected only

¹ Houssaye, "Waterloo," p. 482.

once. Napoleon personified the fire, the dash, the brilliance of the south. Wellington, an Irishman only in the place of his birth, certainly not in character, embodied the hardness, caution, sound sense and stubbornness characteristic of the Anglo-Saxon. By temperament and of necessity he waged a defensive warfare. The puny land forces of England having to be husbanded at every turn, his first thought was to save his army from destruction. That was the last thought of Napoleon, who in his later years recked little of losing 100,000 men if he could inflict a loss of 120,000 on his enemy. Inspiring boundless enthusiasm in his men, he expected them to perform prodigies of endurance; and when they fell, another host arose at the stamp of his foot to repeat the miracle, until generous France was bled white by her adopted son. Wellington, austere and uninspiring, got far less out of his troops before and after battles. On the field they fought with native hardihood; but on no occasion did the Duke win a campaign by continuous forced marches like those of the French before Ulm; and never did he spur on his army to the extraordinary feats which in a fortnight after Jena laid Prussia at the invaders' feet. Napier finely compares Wellington's battle to the shock of a battering-ram, Napoleon's to the swell and dash of a mighty wave which carries all before it and then floods the land beyond.¹

In the nature of the case Wellington could rarely plan the vast combinations which decided the fate of Europe by a few trenchant strokes at the climax. In

¹ Napier, "Peninsular War," bk. xxiv, ch. ii.

the year 1813, the one campaign when he had a superiority of force, his moves were as daring and successful as those of most of Napoleon's wars; and it is therefore incorrect to assert that he always played a safe game and shone only in defence. He was a master of defensive warfare, perhaps the greatest the world has ever seen; but the series of rapid out-flanking moves, which carried him from Valladolid to Vittoria, may challenge comparison with, say, the Marengo campaign, while Vittoria itself was better fought than Marengo. The Briton of course had not the strategic imagination which planned the Egyptian and Russian expeditions; and his innate prudence no less than his lack of men forbade his displaying the superhuman audacity which wrested victory from the jaws of defeat after Aspern. But in the sphere of tactics he showed at Salamanca signal power in detecting the false move of Marshal Marmont and meting out prompt punishment. Salamanca will bear comparison with the highest example of Napoleon's tactical skill. Napier, who admired both leaders, thus summed up their chief characteristics. "Wellington possessed in a high degree that daring promptness of action, that faculty of inspiration for suddenly deciding the fate of whole campaigns with which Napoleon was endowed beyond all mankind. It is this which especially constitutes military genius. For so vast, so complicated are the combinations of war, so easily and by such slight causes are they affected, that the best generals do but grope in the dark, and they acknowledge the humiliating truth. By the

number and extent then of their fine dispositions, and not by their errors, the merit of commanders is to be measured."¹

Napier, then, puts Wellington not far below Napoleon. The passage is ever memorable because it disposes, or ought to dispose, of the superficial statement that the greatest general is he who makes the fewest mistakes. Like all merely negative descriptions, this does not carry us far. As well might one say that the finest batsman is he who merely tires out the bowling, never accepting a risk or giving a chance. The French sneered at Wellington for adopting safe tactics. Salamanca, Vittoria and Waterloo were his retort. Because they despised him, he beat the French marshals in turn, and finally Napoleon. In one respect he was greater than Napoleon. In wise adaptation of means to ends, he has had no equal. To take two instances. While Napoleon, by clinging on to Moscow threw away his best army, Wellington cautiously retreated from Madrid in face of an overwhelming concentration of the French, and so saved his army for the Vittoria campaign. Again at Waterloo the Duke held back the cavalry brigades of Vandeleur and Vivian, and at the crisis launched them forward in a way which Napoleon considered decisive of the fate of the day.² Too late Napoleon must have repented of his rash assertion that Wellington had no mind. The Duke's judgement, if not always brilliant, was thoroughly sound; and it kept under

¹ Napier, "Peninsular War," bk. xxiv, ch. ii. 1

² "Nap. Corresp.," xxviii, 298; xxxi, 198.

stern control the other faculties which, uncontrolled, make for ruin.

Thus, even on that side of Napoleon's being which soared beyond the comprehension of average men, Nature found means to redress the balance; for the exercise of terrifying and almost superhuman powers binds mankind together for self-preservation; and leaders will arise, able, if not to vie with the war-lord at all points, yet to deal out swift vengeance when he overreaches himself. If the Emperor had retained the power of self-analysis so strong in his youth, he would have perceived that constant success warps the judgement and impairs the faculty of weighing evidence which is eminently needful for the maintenance of colossal power. His overthrow may therefore be ascribed finally to the Nemesis, which, working through character, dogs the steps of unending triumph.

LECTURE IV

THE LAWGIVER

“S’il y avait un art dans lequel Napoléon excellât, c’était celui de combiner la mesure de satisfaction qu’il fallait accorder à chacun et de balancer tous les intérêts.—PASQUIER, *Mémoires*, i, 150.”

“EQUALITY on the march”: Such was a description of the French Revolutionary armies. It was therefore natural that their greatest general should be the ablest guide of the nation, when the desire for peace and order supervened. For indeed the gifts of command and organization are not unlike in the two spheres. A successful commander must possess the faculties of foresight as to the probable course of events, of insight into character, and of sound sense in the adjustment of conflicting interests. Napoleon, as we have seen, declared that the art of war was an immense study which included all others.¹ Certainly, warriors have often shone as lawgivers and administrators, witness the careers of Pericles, Caesar, Charlemagne, Alfred the Great, William the Conqueror, Edward I, Cromwell, Peter the Great, Frederick the Great, and Washington.

Napoleon also owed much of his success in legis-

¹ Roederer, “Journal,” p. 324.

lation to the arduous self-culture of his early years. His copious notes on books which described the history and government of the chief nations of ancient and modern times reveal his intense interest in their experiments. Thus he remarks that the Persians, in passing sentence on the guilty, took into account their former conduct, and did not allow that one crime should overshadow the good conduct of a whole life. In studying the history of Sparta, he paid special attention to the half-legendary legislation of Lycurgus, designed to curb the royal power, and to invigorate and moderate the energy of the citizens, thereby preserving them both from despotism and from anarchy. Lycurgus (he writes) saw the need of inspiring the people with patriotism, and yet of keeping it within due bounds; also of safeguarding democracy by its necessary support, equality; he therefore resolved to apportion the land equally, and forbade the use of gold and silver money. Public meals also met with Bonaparte's approval. Further, as we saw in Lecture II, the young Jacobin held strongly to Rousseau's dogma of the unity of the State, condemning everything which impaired political and social unity. The first article of his creed was the dominance of the central authority representing the nation.

These fundamental notions of his Jacobinical period were soon to be warped by the disillusionments of his early life and the stern realities of warfare. But they remained at the back of his mind, suffusing his thoughts, suggesting parallels, and adding vivacity

to his discourses in the Council of State. For him, the chief task of government ever was to unify, to break down provincial barriers, to abolish exceptional laws of classes or of districts, to govern for the people, while allowing them little more than the form of self-government, to mark out a wide sphere for the unfettered exercise of the central power, endowing it with the intelligence and energy due to a careful study of the past, a keen perception of the needs of the present, and rational hopes for the future.

Fortunately for him he arrived at the centre of the world's activities when revolutionary zeal had swept away most of the old barriers throughout France and her vassal States. The Jacobinical theory of government here coincided with the monarchical instincts always so powerful in France. Therefore the old and the new elements in her life favoured the rise of an intelligent despotism; and he, the representative alike of autocracy and republicanism, standing at the point where these formerly clashing forces now at last converged, pressed on and was borne along to an unparalleled destiny. After a decade of upheaval, order was earth's first law. He became the lawgiver, the executant of order, and proceeded to simplify both the legislative and executive functions of the State by identifying both with his will. The French monarchy and the French Revolution were alike merged in Napoleon.

His administrative genius took France by storm in the year 1800. But those who had marked his organization of Italy, Malta, and Egypt noticed the

emergence of exceptional powers. His political apprenticeship began in North Italy in the year 1796. First of all he gripped with a firm hand the reins of administration in the districts conquered or liberated by the French arms. He forced the hands of the Directors at Paris by strengthening the desire of the Lombards and Modenese for independence. As far as possible he stopped the peculations of the French army agents and others, who both plundered the people and robbed the army. He instituted a commission for the trial of such crimes, and declared that, if he could spare a month to investigate the charges, he would have all the guilty shot.¹

Then, too, note how firmly he, a youth of twenty-seven, treated the Italians. After the last decisive victories over Austria he announced to the French Directory that, in order to found rational liberty in the new Italian Republics, he would strive to lessen the influence of the priests, who at present were dictating the elections of deputies. He therefore took upon himself to suspend the activity of the young Government at Milan. On 8th May 1797 he wrote to the Directory at Paris: "In four distinct committees I am having drawn up here all the military, civil, financial, and administrative laws, which must accompany the constitution. For the first occasion I will make all the selections, and I hope that in three weeks' time the new Italian Republic will be throughout wholly and perfectly organized, and will be able to walk alone." Here, then, for the first time were

¹ "Nap. Corresp.," i, 573; ii, 50, 56, 219, 303.

seen the astounding energy and resourcefulness of the young general. He also perceived that the Italian Jacobins, bitterly hostile to religion and the established social order, needed a still firmer hand than the priests. In that same letter he used these words: "I am chilling the hot-heads and heating the cold", an excellent motto for the reasonable man, who at all times tries to keep the political temperature between sixty and seventy degrees. In short, his policy was one of conciliation. Hear his words of advice to the men of the Cisalpine Republic at Milan respecting the new constitution: "To be worthy of your destiny, pass only laws that are wise and moderate. Carry them out with force and energy. Encourage the spread of intelligence and respect religion. Form your battalions, not of men of straw, but of citizens attached to the principles of the Republic and closely concerned in its prosperity. . . . I have made very many State appointments, thereby running the risk of overlooking the honest man and preferring the intriguer; but there was greater inconvenience in letting you make these first nominations. You were not yet sufficiently organized."

His energies found a novel sphere in Egypt. Ever anxious to make the most of every opportunity, he took with him a company of *savants*, who were to explore the buried treasures and develop the stagnant powers of that land. Undaunted, nay, rather nerved to greater efforts by the disaster to the French fleet at Aboukir, he planned the Institute of Egypt, or-

ganized in four sections—Mathematics, Physics, Political Economy, and the Arts. At the first session he suggested these questions for consideration. Could the baking-ovens of the army be improved? Was there any substitute for hops in the brewing of beer? How could the waters of the Nile be purified for drinking purposes? Was a wind-mill or a water-mill the more serviceable? Could gunpowder be produced in Egypt? What was the state of law and of education in Egypt; and how could they be improved conformably to the notions of the natives? I doubt whether a learned society has ever received a more imperious impulse towards the practical.

As for the civil administration of Egypt, Bonaparte summoned an Assembly of Notables, who were to be selected by the French generals commanding in the fourteen provinces. Obviously it served merely as a screen, thinly hiding the reality of military rule.¹ When the embodiment of western energy meets the stern passivity of the East, friction must ensue. Take the following instance as typical of much. Bonaparte issued an order that every Egyptian must wear a tricolour cockade and every Nile boat must hoist a tricolour flag (4th September 1798). It was by fussy interferences like this, that the French irritated the Moslems and contributed to bring about the revolt of 21st October at Cairo.

During the French occupation of Egypt commerce suffered both from the war and the multitude of new

¹ See, however, the instructions of 3rd September 1798, to Murat.

regulations which confused and vexed the natives.¹ The letters of Kléber, Bonaparte's successor in Egypt, dwelt persistently on the magnitude of the deficit. The treasury was absolutely empty. The pay of the army was 4,000,000 francs in arrear, and there were 6,000,000 francs more of debt. It is clear, then, that Bonaparte soon exhausted the land by his exactions, so that it could not meet the needs of the army and of an active administration of the western type. Kléber also declared that the manufactures of cannon, muskets, and gunpowder were failures, and the troops were in rags. The picture may be too sombre; for Kléber bitterly resented the sudden departure of Bonaparte, which left him to face the problems of bankruptcy long since imminent;² but there can be little doubt that in Egypt, as in Malta, Bonaparte overshot the mark. He forgot that orientals care very much about creeds and customs, and not at all about science and prosperity. In the immobile East caution and self-restraint are the first of political virtues. Now, great as were Napoleon's gifts as lawgiver, he lacked those sovereign qualities. His nature was too fiery, his self-confidence too deep-rooted, his energies too many-sided, to keep within the bounds of prudence needed in the Orient; and thus, while at Paris he was acclaimed as Conqueror of the East, in reality he left behind him a half-naked army and an exhausted land.

Probably the administrative collapse in Egypt helped to tone down his youthful eagerness. Certainly

¹ Rose, "Napoleonic Studies," pp. 119-131.

² "Kléber et Menou" (ed. by F. Rousseau), pp. 26, 76-84.

he showed far greater wisdom in dealing with France; and it is clear that his many-sided activities were much better suited to the settlement of a wealthy land long in a state of turmoil than to the regulation of needy orientals who only wanted to be left alone. Energy is as useful in the former case as it is harmful in the latter. True, France had suffered from an excess of energy, but it was the energy of hostile factions, which in their brief spell of power forced on her decrees, often at the rate of a thousand a year, soon to be altered by the next group of successful intriguers. After these St. Vitus' dance antics France needed a political paregoric. With admirable judgement Bonaparte supplied it.

The evils of France before the *coup d'état* of Brumaire 1799 have, perhaps, been overrated. Both in the civil and military spheres the worst was past.¹ The Allies had been beaten back from the frontiers, and at home the extreme Jacobins had been crushed. Affairs were beginning to right themselves under the lead of Sieyès; but the influence of that bloodless creature withered before that of Napoleon. With no less wit than truth the First Consul justified his changes in Sieyès' projected constitution: "What was I to do? Sieyès put shadows on every side. It required a substance somewhere, and I put it there." That was true; he put himself at the central point of that complicated mechanism, controlling the checks and balances, so that what would have been a mere weighing-machine became a locomotive. The curious thing is

¹ Aulard, "Hist. politique de la Rev. franç.," pp. 686-9, 695.

that Sieyès looked on impassively at this transformation of democracy into autocracy. In fact, he said to Roederer: "After long reflection I am convinced that for the settlement of affairs one man alone is needed, and that man can be none other than Bonaparte."¹ Or, as he remarked on another occasion, Bonaparte was the only general who had the faculties of a civilian. In truth, the other generals were either rough and ignorant soldiers, or had no desire to meddle in civil affairs. The only exceptions were Bernadotte, who was unpopular, and Moreau, who, however active and resourceful in the field, was in politics a mere schoolboy, his opposition to Bonaparte on one occasion leading him to confer the ribbon of the Legion of Honour on his dog.

The dearth of great men told powerfully in favour of Napoleon. Democracy can succeed only where the great mass of the people is perpetually energized by self-confidence, self-respect, and hope. The people that falters is lost. Now, since the Reign of Terror, France had often faltered and wavered. During five years she found no competent guide, only ingenious talkers. It is the bane of democracy that persuasive speakers come to the front too easily, leaving far behind the sage administrator, the able man of action. That has been so from the age of Cleon onwards. True, the risks of this peculiar system are lessened by the presence of permanent officials, the secret prompters of the political stage. Nevertheless, the fortunes of great peoples have been determined very largely

¹ Roederer, "Journal," p. 14.

by men whose first recommendation has been eloquence; and only after sad experience has the balance turned in favour of the man of action. Nowhere have the oscillations been so sharp as in France; for in the year 1789 orators abounded; and it took some time to work through the rhetorical stratum down to the bed rock. Dumont, the friend of Mirabeau, ironically remarked that, whereas in London nobody wished to manage the State, in Paris everybody believed himself equal to the task.¹

This in part explains the course of the French Revolution and the rise of Napoleon. By the year 1799 the time for the man of action had come. His supremacy was assured if he combined the functions of commander-in-chief and permanent official. Napoleon embodied them perfectly. In him the old Roman gift of organization on a great scale was vivified by an exalted patriotism, by a historic sense which weighed the aspirations of new France against the experience of old France, by a resolve to have done with the revolutionary jargon and to see things as they were. Too long had the National Assemblies legislated for man in the abstract. That legal figment was no more like a real man than extract of beef is like the living ox. Napoleon was determined to legislate, not for an abstraction, but for Parisians, Normans, Provençaux. So far back as September 1797 he thus expressed his contempt for the legislators of France: "This Legislature, without eyes or ears for what surrounds it, must no longer overwhelm us with a thousand decrees passed on the

¹ Dumont, "Souvenirs sur Mirabeau," ch. x.

spur of the moment, negating one absurdity by another, and leaving us, amidst three hundred folios of laws, a lawless nation." Napoleon was determined to decimate the laws, but to have the surviving part obeyed. The first essentials of legislation are to simplify and to enforce.

His first important effort was in the sphere of local government (February 1800). Here, as at so many points, the Revolutionists had gone to ridiculous excess. They had made too many local divisions, each with an elective council. Consequently the voters soon tired of going to the poll, still more of filling the many posts set up by the Departmental System. Judge of its demands on civic intelligence and patriotism from the fact that one Frenchman in thirty was a local official of some kind. The results were such as always happen when legislation outruns the intelligence of those whom it aims at benefiting. The frequent elections tired out Jacques Bonhomme and told in favour of the two classes which never weary of voting, jobbers and fanatics. In a short time the whole system broke down and was replaced largely by control exercised from Paris through *représentans en mission* or the local Jacobin clubs. Affairs were in much disorder in 1799: and Bonaparte did well in turning his attention first to this pressing problem. Sieyès and his colleagues had already pointed to the solution, namely, the nomination at Paris of Prefects responsible for the local government of the Departments.¹ But Bonaparte's law of 17th

¹ Vandal, "L'Avénement de Bonaparte," ii, 189.

February 1800 was more drastic than any which Sieyès could have carried. Local self-government now made way for a system in which the initiative and control belonged ultimately to the First Consul. The chief authority in each Department was vested in a Prefect appointed by and responsible to the chief of the State. Sub-Prefects controlled the new and smaller areas, the *arrondissements*; while the mayors exercised executive functions in the smallest areas, the communes. Prefects, Sub-Prefects, and the mayors of all but the small towns and villages were appointed by the First Consul; and Prefects named the mayors in the other cases. All these officials were assisted by local elective councils; but the extent of their assistance may be measured by the duration of their sessions, which were limited to a fortnight a year. They then apportioned the national taxes for their districts, and voted the local rates.

Thus, at one stroke Napoleon substituted his own control for that which had been partially and fitfully exercised by the elective bodies of the previous decade. The same thing happened to the *juges de paix*. Formerly elected by the people, they were now to be named by the Prefects. The most astounding fact remains to be noticed. The law passed with little opposition even from the Tribunate, the criticizing organ of the body politic. And thus, almost at a bound, France passed from local self-government to an administrative autocracy which prepared the way for a political despotism.

The transformation at Paris was helped on by

Sieyès' inept arrangements. His constitution divided the Legislature into four bodies—a Council of State which prepared laws; a Tribune, which merely criticized but could not amend them; a Corps Législatif, deprived of speech and allowed merely to pass or reject them; and, as a crown to this singular system, a Senate, whose chief duty was to hold it together. An American wit has described the constitution of the United States as an ingenious contrivance for enabling America to talk herself hoarse. Much the same was said about that of Sieyès. The duty of the Tribune was "to talk"; that of the Corps Législatif was "not to talk." Or, as Bonaparte incisively remarked: "One hundred men do nothing but talk, and three hundred do nothing but vote, without speaking a word. Futile dream of a mediocre intelligence." The First Consul soon made use of the Senate for the purpose of declaring which members of the Tribune should form the fifth portion retiring annually—a device which degraded the watchdog of the constitution into a creature of the First Consul. Against some of the more independent of the Tribunes, notably Benjamin Constant, Daunou, and Chénier, he declaimed in vehement terms (29th January 1801) as "Metaphysicians whom it were well to duck in the water. They are vermin that I have on my clothes. You must not think that I will let myself be attacked like Louis XVI. I will not allow it."¹

Nothing is more surprising than the victory of one

¹ Thibaudeau, "Bonaparte and the Consulate" (Eng. edit.), p. 31.

autocratic spirit over the instinct for liberty paramount in France since 1789. That weary people acquiesced even in the unjust punishment of exile accorded to the Jacobin chiefs after the royalist plot of Nivôse, 1800, with which they had not the slightest connection. Further, during the years 1800-2, Bonaparte not only overthrew Austria and made a most advantageous peace with England, but secured the support of the peasants and all devout Catholics by the famous treaty with the Vatican known as the Concordat. As his treatment of this problem reveals character more clearly than any number of adjectives and epithets can do, I propose to review it somewhat fully.

While in North Italy he was much impressed by the power of religion and the fidelity of the French "orthodox" priests. Accordingly, not long after the Battle of Marengo, he informed Cardinal Martiniana of his willingness to treat with the Pope for the restoration of public worship in France, provided that all French Bishops, whether "orthodox" or "constitutional," resigned their sees. Thereupon he, as First Consul, would nominate for canonical investiture by the Pope eminent ecclesiastics selected fairly from the two parties into which the Church of France was then divided.

As is well known, a law of the year 1790 had split the Church of France into two sections, the "orthodox," who kept unimpaired their allegiance to the Pope, and the "constitutionals," who impaired it by taking the oath of obedience to the new decree of the National Assembly. Thereafter the "orthodox"

priests were regarded as enemies of the Revolution; and at the worst crises even the "constitutionals" were forbidden to celebrate public worship. The atheism of the Terrorists and of their would-be imitators in 1797-9 served to disgust France, while the patient heroism of the "orthodox" priests invested the Church with a moral grandeur unknown in her days of worldly prosperity. Affairs were therefore tending towards some compromise when Bonaparte became First Consul; and he never showed more discernment and activity than in carrying through his bargain with the Vatican.

In truth the opportunity was unique. The Revolutionists had erred in thrusting upon the clergy an oath contrary to the dogma of apostolical succession. He resolved to end their fussy and needless intervention in the domain of conscience. On the other hand, he was equally resolved to retain for the French peasantry the Church property seized or bought during the Revolution, and to vindicate their freedom from tithe. Thus, in the material sphere he pressed the Church hard, reducing it to dependence on stipends paid by the State, a plan which harmonized admirably with his political aims, besides fulfilling the promise made by Mirabeau in 1789 but soon broken by the Jacobins. No part of their conduct had been so foolish and mean as that by which, firstly, they violated conscience, and, secondly, abrogated the State stipends which were a set off to an act of State confiscation. The problem was one which called for the intervention of a strong and incisive personality; and Bonaparte

adopted a line of conduct calculated to ease the apprehensions of the peasantry, soothe the resentment of the clergy, heal a religious schism, and rally to his side the stately hierarchy of Rome. In no negotiation of his life did he conciliate so many interests, appease so much hatred, and gain over so many opponents. With his usual keen discernment he foresaw these advantages to the cause of law and order; and it is therefore not surprising that he pushed on the negotiations with the Vatican swiftly, skilfully, secretly, so that even his Council of State knew little about it until the chief difficulties were adjusted.

He let fall the first hints of the approaching bargain with Rome during a conversation with Roederer in the garden at Malmaison in August 1800. Roederer, a useful coadjutor at Brumaire, was president of that section of the Council of State which dealt with the internal affairs of France; and his faculty of dexterously trimming, and of expressing public opinion, made him a valuable adviser. On this occasion Bonaparte, after speaking about the peculation of officials, burst out with the assertion that France was and always had been corrupt, and that her paramount need was morality. But how could there be morality without religion? When Roederer ventured to suggest that religion must serve and not dominate the State, Bonaparte assented, adding these curious words: "How can you have order in a State without religion? Society cannot exist without inequality of fortunes, which cannot endure apart from religion. When one man is dying of hunger near another who is ill of sur-

feit, he cannot resign himself to this difference, unless there is an authority which declares—‘God wills it thus: there must be poor and rich in the world: but hereafter and during all eternity the division of things will take place differently.’” On several occasions Bonaparte uttered the same thought. He regarded religion as a political emollient, highly useful to administer in times of excitement, the priest holding in reserve a spiritual sedative in case the policeman alone could not cope with starving Lazarus.

Another advantage would accrue to Napoleon from the compact with the Vatican. He might hope to gain over the Royalists if the Church became his ally. This motive appeared very clearly in his words to a Councillor of State, Thibaudeau, during a conversation in the garden at Malmaison on 10th June 1801.

Last Sunday I was walking here alone when I heard the church bells of Ruel. I felt quite moved by the sound: so strong is the power of early association. I said to myself, “If such a man as I can be affected in this way, how deep must be the impression on simple believing souls? What have your philosophers and *idéologues* to say to that? A nation must have a religion, and that religion must be under the control of the Government. At present fifty *émigré* bishops, pensioned by England, control the French clergy. Their influence must be destroyed, and nothing but the authority of the Pope can do that. He will deprive them of their sees or induce them to send in their resignations. We shall issue a declaration that the Catholic religion, being that of the majority of the French nation, must be recognized and organized. The First Consul will nominate 50 bishops, whom the Pope will institute. They will appoint

the *cures*, and the State will give them all salaries. All alike shall take an oath of fidelity to the Government. Those who refuse to submit shall be banished, and those who preach against the Government, shall be handed over to their ecclesiastical superiors for punishment. The Pope shall confirm the sale of Church property, and give his blessing to the Republic. We shall have 'Salvam fac rem Gallicam' chanted at mass. The papal Bull is here: there are only a few expressions to be changed. People may call me a Papist if they like. I am nothing. I was a Mohammedan in Egypt: I shall be a Catholic in France for the sake of the people."¹

There in brief is the story of the Concordat. Bonaparte pushed on the negotiations, cheered, it may be, by the sound of the church bells of Ruel, and certainly nerved by the resolve to remove the clergy from the control of the fifty exiled bishops to that of an equal number of bishops instituted by the Pope, but taking their marching orders from the First Consul. In the discussions with the Cardinals at Paris Bonaparte displayed the same ready tact and resourcefulness, which sometimes dealt a rebuff to those subtle reasoners even on their own ground of Church history or ecclesiastical law. No ruler has ever displayed equal skill in rapidly "getting up" a subject so as to refute or perplex even an expert by some adroit sally. The Concordat was proclaimed with great pomp at Notre Dame on Easter Day, 18th April 1802. The Consuls went in state to hear high mass; and it was noted that Bonaparte's household now for the first time appeared in full livery. The ambassadors and high

¹ Thibaudeau, *op. cit.*, pp. 153-155.

officials were also asked to come in state and bring their servants in livery. The request seems to have caused some inconvenience to those who previously had kept up a republican simplicity; for at the tail of the gorgeous procession were seen several hackney-coaches with their numbers painted or pasted over.

The carrying through of the Concordat was perhaps the most important success of Bonaparte's career; and thereafter, if he had foreborne from pressing Pius VII too hard, the Roman Church would have proved the firmest stay of his throne. In November 1804, when the aged pontiff was on the way to crown him at Paris, he bade French officials treat him as though he had 200,000 troops at his back. The remark is characteristic of this keen observer of human nature, who knew how to derive added strength from every sentiment and every institution. As an example of this useful faculty I will quote his words to the Council of State on 22nd May 1804 shortly after the proclamation of the Empire: "It is my wish to re-establish the institution for foreign missions; for the religious missionaries may be very useful to me in Asia, Africa, and America, as I shall make them reconnoitre all the lands they visit. The sanctity of their dress will not only protect them, but serve to conceal their political and commercial investigations. The head of the missionary establishment shall reside no longer at Rome but in Paris."¹ Such was to be a Napoleonic and up-to-date version of the Roman college *de propaganda fide*.

¹ Pelet, p. 243.

Having so keen a perception of the value of clerical support, surely he acted unwisely in alienating it. But his resolve to dominate the Church by the Organic Articles led to long and bitter strifes, ending with the deposition of the Pope at Rome (May 1809), his enforced sojourn at Savona and Fontainebleau, and the undoing of most of the work of pacification achieved by the Concordat. This unworthy treatment of a defenceless old man told against the Napoleonic Empire more seriously than any one disaster in the field. It is one of the mysteries of Napoleon's character and career that he, who had displayed so much tact and conciliation as First Consul, should finally have treated the Pope with a haughty disdain which culminated in downright persecution.

The treaty with Rome proved to be the starting point of other enterprises. The first in point of time and of importance was that of the Legion of Honour. In order to understand the significance of this new institution, one must remember that by the constitution of the year 1799 there were some 5,000 Notables of the Nation, chosen by successive winnowings of the adult males of France. They were the elect of the people; and from among them were to be chosen the legislators and the chief executive officers of the State. Objections had been raised as to the choice of the Notables of the Nation; but to supersede them was to strike at the system of popular government devised by Sieyès. This, however, is what Bonaparte did. He mooted the proposal of a Legion of Honour

in the middle of April 1802, that is, soon after the declaration of peace with England and the proclamation of the Concordat. Early in May he charged Roederer to mention it to the Council of State. In his private journal Roederer made a weak and rambling apology for the First Consul and himself, namely, that neither of them foresaw the result of the new proposal to be the replacement of the Lists of Notability by a Legion appointed by the First Consul. So far as concerned Bonaparte this is mere trifling. The *raison d'être* of the proposal was the substitution of personal choice for popular election; and this soon proved to be the chief outcome of it. Very skilfully Bonaparte represented that the new scheme would give effect to Article 87 of the constitution which promised a system of national rewards for eminent military service. Obviously this article referred to a badge or decoration for bravery or distinguished service in the field; and when Roederer had read out to the Council of State the new proposals, which included rewards for civilians, Mathieu Dumas maintained that the article referred only to military rewards.

Thereupon Bonaparte broke forth into an elaborate eulogium of civil qualities as surpassing those of the soldier. He admitted that courage and prowess were all important in the days of feudalism and chivalry; but, said he, in the present age, the qualities needed by a commander were foresight, power of calculation, administrative ability, ready wit, eloquence such as appeals to soldiers, and above all, knowledge of men. All these were civil qualities. He continued thus: "The

general who is capable of great things is he who possesses the finest civil qualities. He is obeyed and respected on account of his intellectual ability. . . . Take the soldier and separate him from all his civic surroundings, and you have a man who knows no other law but brute force, who judges everything by that standard, and sees nothing beyond it. The civilian, on the contrary, makes the good of the nation his standard. The method of the soldier is to act despotically; that of the civilian is to submit to discussion, to truth, to reason."

Such are a few outstanding sentences of a remarkable speech, the effect of which is not much lessened by the fact that the opportunity which evoked it seems to have been fully foreseen. Bonaparte's words produced a profound impression on the councillors, who, being nearly all civilians, were delighted to hear the greatest of soldiers place them above the soldiery. They remained silent with admiration, and the First Consul closed the session. Nevertheless, at the next sitting some of them plucked up courage to contest the proposal of a Legion of Honour. The jurist, Berlier, said that it would lead straightway to aristocracy: crosses and ribbons were the toys of monarchy. Bonaparte, after a clever retort at the expense of the Roman Republic and Brutus, boldly declared that men were governed by toys. Ten years of Revolution had not changed the character of the French, who were high-spirited and light-hearted like the Gauls, ready to bow before the stars of foreigners, enamoured of glory and therefore of distinctions.

These two speeches ensured the success of the measure. True, ten members present out of twenty-four voted against it; but all but one of the ten not long afterwards accepted either the title of Count or membership in the Legion of Honour.¹ Other results followed, namely, the abolition of the Lists of Notables in August 1802, and the institution of an order of Imperial Nobility in 1806. Napoleon almost certainly had these aims in view when he instituted the Legion of Honour; and by contrast one must admire the conduct of Washington, who, on becoming President, abolished the Order of Cincinnatus, founded in 1783 as a reward for distinguished service in the field.

By the legislative achievements of the spring and summer of 1802 Bonaparte determined the future of France. She acquiesced in his supremacy; and on 2nd August he became First Consul for Life, with power to nominate his successor. At the same time he struck down the Tribunate. Even the illegal action of the "conservative Senate" had failed to stop the criticisms of that body, which greatly annoyed Bonaparte by opposing the Legion of Honour and certain articles of the Civil Code. He inveighed against the Tribunes as "dogs whom I meet everywhere;" and again he said "The Tribunate must be divided into sections, and its debates must be secret; then they can babble as much as they like." His wish became law by a *Senatus Consultum* of 4th August 1802, which reduced the Tribunate to fifty members, selected by the Senate, and divided into five sections

¹ Thibaudeau, p. 146, note.

debating secretly. On the other hand, he enhanced the power of that subservient body, the Senate, the decrees of which soon took the place of laws passed by the Corps Législatif. The Council of State also suffered by the creation of a Privy Council which usurped many of its functions, and was completely at his disposal. These modifications completed the reaction from republicanism to autocracy, and the absorption of "the general will" in the will of Napoleon.

As a lawgiver, Bonaparte, First Consul, was far greater than Napoleon, Emperor. Not yet had he set himself to crush the least sign of opposition. In the Council of State he seemed to court it. A councillor, Pelet de la Lozère, vividly describes some of its sessions which were enlivened by the presence of the chief. Sometimes he announced his intention of being present; but often the roll of the drums on the staircase of the Tuilleries gave the first warning of his approach. He entered, preceded by his chamberlain, followed by the aide-de-camp on duty, took his seat on a chair only slightly raised above the level, and invited attention to some proposal, or else listened to the discussion on hand. If it did not interest him, he sank into a deep reverie, or else threw in remarks, not always to the point, but tersely and picturesquely bodying forth his thoughts, either on problems of the present or projects of the future. During these discursive moods, his presence did not expedite the discussions. Often they wandered into by-paths, whence however, no one wished to return, so vivid was the light thrown on the fortunes of France. At other

times he elucidated the subject by searching questions that revealed his mental superiority. Of this he was fully conscious, witness the following frank remark—"Do you know why I allow so much discussion at the Council of State? It is because I am the strongest debater in the whole Council. I let myself be attacked, because I know how to defend myself."¹

As a result of his eager inquisitiveness, the sessions were often very long, even lasting from nine a.m. to five p.m., with only a quarter of an hour for lunch. Towards the end, when other members showed signs of fatigue, he seemed as fresh as ever, and at the time of closing would jocularly pronounce the prorogation most premature. Or again, during the all-night sessions in which he demonstrated his inaccessibility to ordinary human weakness, he rallied the nodding members with the words: "Come, Sirs, we have not yet earned our stipends." Sometimes his humour showed itself in a more modest guise. During the debates on the more technical points of the new Civil Code, he spoke with great deference of the aged and experienced jurist, Tronchet. Thus on 15th November 1801, he said: "The words of such a man as Tronchet are authoritative to us all. As for the rest of us, men of the sword or of finance, who are not lawyers but legislators, our opinions are of little consequence. In these discussions I have sometimes said things which a quarter of an hour later I have found were all wrong. I have no wish to pass for being worth more than I really am." There Bonaparte is at his best, un-

¹ Roederer, "Journal," p. 133.

spoiled as yet by domination and its sinister shadow, flattery.

In his greatest and most enduring work, the codification of French law, his dominant motive was to harmonize the conflicting ideas of the times of the Revolution and of the monarchy. At several points he went back to the old customs, as when he insisted on strengthening the control of the father over the children, and of the husband over the wife. Here his Corsican notions clashed with those that prevailed during the French Revolution. As we saw, the customs of Corsica allowed a father in extreme cases to kill his son; and the power of the husband over the wife was almost oriental. The social anarchy of the Revolution favoured a reaction towards the old Roman ideals; and Bonaparte, profiting by the licence of the Jacobins, now insisted on the complete supremacy of the husband. These were his words: "The husband must have absolute power to say to his wife: 'Madame, you shall not go out: you must not go to the play; you must not meet such and such a person.'"¹ The natural retort for a woman of spirit would be—"If you speak so, I will go to the play, and I will meet him."

At this point, then, we again notice Napoleon's tendency to regulate and control. Surely he should have seen that love, or, failing it, conjugal and personal honour, is the chief safeguard of marriage, and that the multiplication of rules tends to weaken those salutary feelings. But at all points he bore hard on

¹ Thibaudeau, p. 195.

women. In pursuance of his Romanesque notions a wife was debarred from all control of her own and her husband's property; she could not even mortgage it. In other respects women were thrust back into a state of dependence as bad as that imposed by the *ancien régime*. The mental vacuity needful for the production of a generation of Griseldas was brought about by a scheme of education which he thus outlined to the Council of State on 20th February 1806: "I do not think we need trouble ourselves with any plan of instruction for young females; they cannot be brought up better than by their mothers. Public education is not suited for them, because they are never called upon to act in public. Manners are all in all to them; and marriage is all they look to."¹ In this sphere the defects of the Code are serious. The position of woman was altered for the worse, so that even now in the countries affected by the Code much must be done in order to endow her with the rights accorded by the laws and customs of the Revolution. At other important points of the Code the influence of Napoleon was reactionary, as in the imposition of unduly heavy penalties or the retention of burdensome statutes.

Nevertheless, in many ways the Code marked a great advance. The compromise on the subject of divorce was suited to the spirit of the times and the need of reconstituting the family. The near approach to equality of bequest to all the children of a family was also a concession to revolutionary sentiment, though Napoleon foresaw with regret its cramping

¹ Pelet, p. 202.

effect on the growth of population. Above all, the Code Napoléon, along with the accompanying Codes of Civil and Criminal Procedure, Penal Law and Commerce, presented a reasoned and harmonious body of statutes, such as had not appeared since the days of Justinian. It did more. For the first time in human society, the poor and unlettered had the chance of knowing what the laws were; for Napoleon brought to bear on legal phraseology his own habits of clear thinking, with the result that he who ran might read and understand nearly all the articles of the Code—an ideal not yet fully attained by any branch of the practical English race. To some extent the striving after simplicity was carried too far. He himself admitted that this might be the case; but the danger was not avoided, and clearness of expression was not seldom attained at the risk of completeness of statement or of adaptability to probable contingencies. But, when contrasted with the gloom and chaos pervading the laws and feudal customs of Germany and Italy, the Code appeared like a social gospel. Well might the Emperor say at St. Helena that his glory consisted, not in having won forty battles, but in the deliberations of the Council of State and in the Code Napoléon. None of his works bears so markedly the imprint of his forceful personality.

In no sphere of activity was Bonaparte's activity exercised more characteristically than in regard to National Education. That formative idea had been promulgated by Rousseau in his suggestive novel,

"Émile"; and during the Directory and Consulate Pestalozzi was beginning his quaint experiments at Yverdon, while Robert Owen started an infant school on equally original lines at New Lanark. It is scarcely too much to say that the future of the European nations has been largely determined by their attitude to this great question. What was that of Napoleon?

The Jacobins had demolished the semi-monastic system of education prevalent up to 1790. Bonaparte had been trained in it at Brienne, and always spoke with contempt of his teachers, the Minims. In place of the old system the French Convention in 1793 outlined a grand scheme of elementary schools, and central or secondary schools, which should be free in all their grades. Condorcet, who drew up the basic report on this subject, defined the aim of education to be "the cultivation of the physical, intellectual, and moral faculties," so as to contribute to "the general but gradual perfecting of the human race, the final end towards which every social institution should be directed." In the case of promising pupils access to the University was to be facilitated. No country has yet fully attained to the lofty ideal set forth by Condorcet in April 1792. Owing to the turmoil of the Revolution and lack of money little could be done to give effect to these generous plans; and it seems that in 1799 there were in Paris only twenty-four elementary schools, and very few in the Departments. Rather more central schools were to be found; but in them the training was almost wholly scientific and utilitarian. Thus, the grand aim of developing the

faculties, which had been set forth by Condorcet and other educational reformers, remained an ideal; but with the advent of peace and prosperity during the Consulate some approach to it was to be expected.

The performance fell far short of the wishes of the friends of progress. Bonaparte did little or nothing for elementary education, throwing the responsibility for it on local Councils, while the teachers were to be paid out of the scholars' fees, a plan destructive of all respect and discipline. As Thibaudeau remarked, it seemed that the Government rather feared than encouraged too much enlightenment among the lower orders, especially in the country. Very different was Bonaparte's attitude towards secondary education. This he furthered, by developing the central schools, either as secondary schools supported by local funds, or as *lycées* controlled by the Government. The theory of State control had been affirmed by the law of 25th October 1795; but now it received a further development suited to the new autocratic *régime*. The curriculum was widened so as to include Classics and modern languages, while the discipline was almost military in character. To these *lycées* he attached as many as 6,400 *bourses* or scholarships, 4,000 of which went to the most promising pupils of the elementary schools, while the remainder were allotted to the sons of officers and officials. The *lycées*, therefore, had a decidedly governmental tone, the details of the curriculum being prescribed by Napoleon on lines somewhat less utilitarian than those of the central schools, but adapted to ensure success in some one calling

rather than the unfolding of all the mental powers. In regard to the College of St. Cyr and others attached to the Prytaneum Bonaparte enjoined special attention to the instruction which "can make good workmen and men useful in the mechanical arts in the public workshops whether of the army or of the navy." The pupils at these schools were by no means restricted to government service, but every care was taken to induce them to enter it.¹

The dependence of public instruction on the Government was insured by the University of France, an institution which exercised a general control over public instruction. It bears the imprint of the organizing instincts of the Emperor. After revolving the matter for some time he mentioned it to the Council of State on 20th February 1806, not long after his return from the campaign of Austerlitz. These were his words: "I wish to create such an establishment for public instruction as may prove a nursery for professors, rectors, and teachers generally, and that they shall be stimulated by high motives. The young men who devote themselves to the cause of education ought to have clearly before them the prospect of rising to the highest offices in the State. The base of this great system of education will rest on the college, its superstructure may be found in the Senate. But in order to effect this, the principle of celibacy must be established, at least so far as to preclude marriage before the age of 25 or 30." Again on 1st March 1806 he said: "My desire is to establish

¹ "Nap. Corresp.," vii, 169 (Nap. to Chaptal, 11th June 1801).

an order, not of Jesuits whose head resides at Rome, but of Jesuits whose sole ambition shall be to make themselves useful and shall have no interest separated from that of the public. . . . There ought to be two distinct classes of masters—one who should teach the pupils, another who should govern them; for these matters require very different talents. It is my wish" (he continued) "to create in France a civil order in society. Heretofore there have existed in the world only two orders, the military and the ecclesiastical. . . . The civil order will be strengthened by the creation of a body of teachers and still more would it be fortified by a large body of magistrates. . . . After all, my chief object in establishing a body of instructors is that I may possess the means of directing the political and moral opinions of the community." And again on 20th March: "It occurs to me that the corps of instructors may consist of about 10,000 persons; and it seems essential that the members of the University—since that is to be its name—shall have the exclusive right of teaching, and that they shall be sworn in."¹

In pursuance of these aims, the University of France came into existence in 1808, an oath of obedience being required from all its members, even from teachers in the schools. They swore to obey "the laws of the teaching body, which have as their object the uniformity of instruction, and which tend to form for the State citizens attached to their re-

¹ Pelet, pp. 199-204. See, too, Aulard, "Napoléon et le Monopole universitaire."

ligion, their prince, their country and their family." Evidently this was quite as much a political as an educational body. It gave effect to the earlier wish of Napoleon to secure fixity in politics by means of instruction based on established principles. . . . "So long as the people" (these were his words) "are not taught from their earliest years, whether they ought to be Republicans or Royalists, Christians or Infidels, the State cannot properly be called a nation; for it must rest on a foundation which is vague and uncertain; and it will be for ever exposed to disorders and fluctuations."

How pathetic a trust in the omnipotence of law and the pliability of mankind! He regarded the people as so much molten steel to be poured into his moulds, thereby assuming for ever the imprint of his will. Energy like this accomplishes wonders after a time of upheaval; for mankind detests anarchy. Therefore, by retaining the best of the old order and adapting it to the newer needs, the great organizer can speedily form a kosmos out of chaos. But he must beware of excess of zeal. Over-elaboration is a vice to which vigorous minds are often prone; and the subsequent history of France emphasizes the need of avoiding that pyramidal symmetry of construction which almost precludes change in the future. This is the chief defect of the Code Napoléon and of the University of France. The prefectal system and the Concordat are open to the same general criticism. For they involve a system of State control which, with all its clearness and efficiency, is neither easily adapt-

able to the changing conditions of modern life, nor calculated to develop individual initiative in the executants.

The legislative achievements of Napoleon are immense. They, not the *coup d'état* of Brumaire, closed the Revolution; and in this sense his assertion at St. Helena, that he had destroyed the Revolution, is correct.¹ He destroyed it by satisfying the human cravings which started that great movement. With his wide knowledge of history, and the practical good sense characteristic of his early manhood, he brought about a compromise between the past and the present which met the needs of France in that generation; and after a decade of turmoil she hailed his work with enthusiasm.

Nevertheless, it has its defects; and in the main they correspond to those of his own nature. An excess of eagerness and forcefulness appears at many points of his career, and not least in his legislation. It gripped France fast as in an administrative vice. He left nothing to the judgement of posterity; and this is a serious defect; for the efforts even of the master-builders are feeble when compared with the instincts of the race and the needs of succeeding ages. The model of a lawgiver should be a tree, not a pyramid. Burke, in his "Reflections on the French Revolution," uttered this sage warning: "The nature of man is intricate: the objects of society are of the greatest possible complexity; and therefore no single disposition or direction of power can be suitable

¹ Lady Malcolm, "A Diary of St. Helena," p. 102.

either to man's nature or to the quality of his affairs."¹ Well would it have been for Napoleon and for France if he had realized the impossibility of meeting the ever-changing requirements of a great people. His legislation, while losing in symmetry, would have gained in beneficence, had he felt the reverence for the verdict of posterity which consecrated the genius of Burke. As it was, Napoleon subjected the French nature, then flaccid from perpetual change, to a too sudden consolidation. True, he imparted to that nation a firmness which rendered possible magnificent exploits in the present, but at the cost of adaptability and expansion in the future.

His self-sufficiency suffers by comparison with the dignified self-suppression, the hopeful outlook on the future, characteristic of the Athenian lawgiver, Solon. He, living in a time of turmoil and faction, when Athens had not won a definite position in Greece, assured her future by just laws, which, so far as we know, were enacted solely by persuasive methods. He lessened the power of the nobles and called the people to political responsibility. He promoted education of an enlightened type, but was careful to leave it unfettered by the State. He also mitigated the penal code of Draco, and lessened the hitherto unlimited authority of the father over his children. The laws of Solon everywhere bespeak a belief in human nature, a resolve to trust to its higher instincts, a reliance upon persuasion rather than force; and after his year of office as archon, he is said to

¹ Burke, "Reflections," p. 72 (Mr. Payne's edit.).

have travelled abroad in order that Athens might more freely make trial of his laws during the ten years in which nothing could be changed. After that time the city was free to modify them according to the teachings of experience. In these respects, Solon stands forth as the ideal lawgiver, trusting in the higher instincts of mankind, inducing the Athenians to enter an ever-broadening path of political development, and evincing by his own conduct a disinterestedness which is the choicest flower of civic virtue.

Napoleon, coming to the front at a time of political reaction, scoffed at those who thought much about succeeding generations; and in his resolve to meet all the needs of the present, he stamped his personality too deeply on the life of France. He organized it swiftly, ably, and in a way that told for marvellous efficiency at the time, though at the cost of that flexibility which is the pledge of continuous progress. He made France the compact, self-contained organism which was the envy of Europe in 1812, though she is less able to meet the varied needs of 1912. Such is the judgement of many of her most gifted sons, who feel somewhat cramped by the steel framework of the Napoleonic system. But enough of criticism. It is rarely the case that a statesman can meet the needs both of the present and of the future. And we may freely concur in Napoleon's words uttered at St. Helena: "I filled up the gulf of anarchy and unravelled chaos. I purified the Revolution, raised the people, and strengthened monarchy."

LECTURE V

THE EMPEROR

“Quand on veut fortement, constamment, on réussit toujours”
(Napoleon to Paradisi, 3rd July 1805).

NOT long after his return from the campaign of Marengo Napoleon remarked that his power rested on the imagination of the French. This was largely true. He alone of all the leaders of the Revolution since the time of Mirabeau had thrilled the French nature. His victories, the artistic trophies which he sent from Italy, the proclamations which set tingling the blood of civilians and soldiers, the advantageous terms which he extorted from Austria and Great Britain, the hopes held out by him of wresting from hated Albion the empire of the sea, and the golden prospect of a world-wide dominion, served to inflame the brain of France, so that within the years 1796-1802 it recurred to the ideals of the reign of Louis XIV. At heart the French were no longer Republicans; they were *la grande nation*. Bonaparte alone had brought about this change; and therefore he alone could be head of the French monarchy of the future.

Yet there was another side to this question. Pasquier, Roederer, and others who recked little of conquests far afield, provided that Frenchmen might

gain peace at home, held that his rule rested on a utilitarian basis. "You have on your side" (said Roederer in July 1800) "their reason, the feeling of their interests, their needs, but no enthusiasm. . . . The cheers you have heard are nothing in comparison with those which Lafayette aroused in 1789 and 1790, though he had done nothing solid for the public weal. Then it was that imagination held sway. To-day it is only the intimate feeling of your usefulness, of your necessity, which acts upon the French."¹ If this truth had struck home, it would have altered the career of Napoleon and the history of the world. In that case he would have figured as a greater Mirabeau, reconciling the instincts of old France with the aspirations of new France; and she, resting under his aegis, would not have heard those fateful names, Friedland, Wagram, and Borodino. Perhaps he would have been satisfied to remain First Consul for life with power to nominate his successor, taking as his model Washington, rather than Alexander the Great or Caesar.

These remarks imply that Napoleon could have curbed his will and his imagination, a difficult task, but far from impossible; for in early years the objective cast of his thoughts provided a serviceable check to his soaring fancy. The following sentences of his letter of 7th October 1797 to Talleyrand go far to explain his rapid rise to power: "It is only with prudence, wisdom, and great dexterity that obstacles

¹ Roederer, "Journal," p. 9. In 1797, on Bonaparte remarking to Sieyès: "J'ai fait *la grande nation*," there came the retort, "C'est parceque nous avons d'abord fait *la nation*."

are surmounted and important ends attained. From triumph to a fall there is only one step. . . . I see no impossibility in attaining in the course of a few years those splendid results of which the heated and enthusiastic imagination catches a glimpse, but which the extremely cool, persevering, and accurate man alone can grasp." How strange that the young conqueror of Italy, who wrote those words, should fifteen years later fling away his army in the campaign of Moscow!

The proclamation of the French Empire in May 1804, which opened the more grandiose period of Napoleon's career, came as a shock to very many Frenchmen who had believed in the disinterestedness of the First Consul. Carnot voted against the change and then retired into exile. Truguet, the admiral in command of the Brest fleet, refused to sign the address in favour of the Imperial title, and was deprived of his post. Among the troops at Metz and Boulogne there was some grumbling, many officers, *e.g.*, MacDonald and Thiébault, signing only in order to escape annoyance. The exclusion of certain famous names from the list of the new marshals and the inclusion of Bessières proved that distinguished service counted for little unless accompanied by political subservience. At Metz Roederer found the troops and the townsfolk in a state of silent irritation, deeming the execution of the Duc d'Enghien a political murder, and the condemnation of Moreau a piece of personal malice. They refused to be comforted by the assurance that the change to the Empire was only a change

of name, and made reply: "Why, then, are we not spared the needless shame of destroying appearances and titles which at least preserved for us the honour of a kind of consistency and held off the reproach of a stupid contradiction to our past?"¹

These and other proofs which might be cited refute Napoleon's assertion at St. Helena that it was impossible in France to figure as a Washington.² Every intelligent Frenchman wished him to assume that *rôle*, which could have been peaceful after the year 1801. The resentment of a great part of France at the assumption of the Imperial title was destined to strain her relations to Napoleon. True, as Emperor, he had the support of the great majority of Frenchmen, because he guaranteed them against a Bourbon Restoration, and its sequel, class distinctions, feudal dues, tithes, and a resumption of landed property by the Church and the nobles. But intelligent men could not see why he needed to become Emperor in order to keep out the Bourbons. Only those who were utterly ignorant of his soaring ambition and inflexible will could imagine him tamely playing the part of a General Monk and recalling Louis XVIII. So far back as the close of 1799 he had made that perfectly clear to two Royalists of the West of France, Hyde de Neuville and d'Andigné: "Take the side of glory. Come under my flag," he said to them, "my government will be the government of youth and intellect." Andigné gave an impatient shrug of the shoulders

¹ Roederer, "Journal," p. 198.

² Las Cases, "Mémorial," i, 467-469.

and replied: "Our place is elsewhere." Whereupon the First Consul remarked: "What! Would you blush to wear the uniform of Bonaparte? . . . What, then, do you want in order to end the civil war?" "Two things," answered Hyde; "Louis XVIII as legitimate King of France, and Bonaparte to cover her with glory." The First Consul smiled, but assured them he would never recall the Bourbons; and when he failed to move them, he cried out in a passion: "I will burn your towns and your cottages."¹ . . . This was invariably his tone. Not one sign did he ever give that he would sacrifice the Republic to the old dynasty.

Accordingly, Cambacérès and others who knew him well deeply resented the sacrifice of the Republic to his own aggrandizement. The new Emperor was aware of this feeling, and therefore felt a certain distrust, which in its turn begat a haughtiness of tone alien to the happier days of the Consulate. Gorgeous *fêtes*, showers of new dignities, flamboyant proclamations against "perfidious Albion," the concentration of the national energies on the fleet and the Boulogne flotilla, public works of great utility and splendour, all served to divert public attention and hide the distrust; but it was never wholly stifled. During the campaign of 1806 in Prussia, Mollien, Minister of the Public Treasure, sought to find out the real state of mind of leading Frenchmen. He noticed that after the victory at Jena, many who had previously prophesied disaster and called Frederick William of Prussia the

¹ Hyde de Neuville, "Méms.," p. 272.

avenger of the world's liberty, afterwards declared that God himself had strengthened Napoleon to be the champion of the sanctity of treaties. Not that those would-be manipulators of Providence desired the return of the Bourbons; they merely looked ahead to a time when Napoleon should have fallen, and (says Mollien), "held their devotion in reserve on behalf of the next Government, whatever it might be."¹ There is a world of meaning in that phrase. A prominent Frenchman made the shrewd remark about Napoleon III: "Celui-ci est condamné d'être brillant." Much the same necessity was laid upon the First Napoleon; and his vivid fancy magnified the need until it became the master motive of his life.

During several years the experiment completely succeeded; and in the land of the Revolution its "heir" was able to carry anti-Republican measures. Thus he instituted a commission of senators, in order to watch over the liberty of the Press, which succeeded in completely enchaining it. Another commission safeguarded individual liberty, while in the prisons were many who were detained solely at the *fiat* of the Emperor. As Pasquier well remarks, Napoleon upheld in its entirety only one part of revolutionary law, that which concerned the lands confiscated in and after the year 1789.¹

It is the nature of autocracy to become more self-centred; and a masterful character expands with every new conquest. Napoleon's Ministers and the members

¹ Mollien, "Méms.," ii, 90 (edit. of 1845).

² Pasquier, "Méms.," i, 225.

of the Council of State soon had cause to observe the influence of the Imperial dignity on his character and bearing. His use of the term "subjects" instead of "citizens" was significant; and in succeeding months, especially after receiving the holy oil from the Pope at the coronation, he introduced more elaborate ceremonies at Court and treated old counsellors with reserve. While placing in high stations Cambacérès, Talleyrand, and Fouché, he kept them in check by fanning their mutual dislikes, and often dealt outrageous rebukes for trifling indiscretions. As for the Council of State, where formerly he discussed matters frankly, it became more and more a Court registering his mandates or the *Senatus Consulta* under which they were thinly disguised. After his return from Tilsit he evinced an especially dominating mood. Mollien describes Napoleon's methods of overbearing objections which occurred during the debates in the Council of State. At such times (says Mollien) "he armed his polemic with the most urgent arguments, and in some cases with the bitterest censure, and almost always with a flood of objections impossible to foresee, still more so to combat, because the attempt to catch hold of the thread would have been as vain as to break it. He ended most of these confabulations (as Talleyrand termed them) by asking those who had held aloof if he was not right, and in this case he always succeeded in finding every reason submitting to his own. Sometimes also, after digressions of two hours in which he alone spoke, he would say, pointing to his chair and casting a look of good-

natured irony on his auditors, 'Confess that it is easy to be clever on such a seat as this.'" On the other hand he rarely nursed resentment against those who opposed him; and, on hearing that a certain councillor was still smarting under the reproaches levelled at him, remarked: "He is quite wrong; for I scarcely remember the affair."¹

This is characteristic of Napoleon. He rarely displayed the personal animosity to which a small and peevish nature is prone. In the main he was so completely sure of his own superiority as to rise far above the spitefulness which characterized, say, the dealings of George III with Chatham, of Robespierre with Danton, or of Frederick William III with Stein. Napoleon had the failings of an intense and resolute nature, but in his best days he was free from the pettinesses of weaker men. It is questionable whether he took enough interest in men ever to feel deeply about them. For the most part he regarded them as the instruments of his will, valuing them in proportion to their efficiency, sharpening their edge by appeals to love of France or of glory, working them hard, but not so hard as he worked himself, and throwing them aside on proof of incompetence. He did not hate them, any more than one hates a blunt knife. He sharpened it, or threw it away. On one occasion he soundly rated his Minister, Champagny, for not having ready a report which involved long and arduous researches in the Archives. On Champagny explaining that the chief archivist, Hauterive, was ill, Napo-

¹ Mollien, "Méms.," ii, 221-223.

leon turned about sharply towards a councillor who was suffering terribly from the gout, and said, with an untranslatable phrase: "Well, when clerks are ill, they go to the hospital, and one gets others."¹ In fact he resolved to work everyone at high pressure for the glory of France and the aggrandizement of his power. He regarded public policy as a magnified game of chess, necessitating keen foresight, profound calculation, and inflexible resolve. The men were pieces; the prize was a world Empire.

The spread over Europe of the Napoleonic Empire, seems to us now almost like the rise of the phantom city limned by the genius of Milton:

Anon out of the earth a fabric huge
Rose like an exhalation.

We can explain the miracle only by the impetuous energy and many-sided ability of the master-builder and his unequalled power of drawing the utmost from all his subordinates. Working often twelve to sixteen hours a day, gulping down his dinner in twenty minutes, and finding as much rest in an hour spent in a hot bath as ordinary men did in three or four hours of sleep, he toiled with the intense activity and concentrated will-power nowadays needed by the controller of a great system of trusts. He loved work. As his secretary, Méneval, remarked: "The devouring activity of his brain, which never found enough material on which to work, and kept growing in proportion to

¹ Chaptal, "Souvenirs," p. 360.

the multiplicity of business, used to suffice for everything." Napoleon said to Las Cases at St. Helena: "Work is my element, for which I was born and fitted. I have found the limits of power of my legs and of my eyes: I have never discovered those of my power of work. So I was near killing that poor Méneval. I had to replace him and send him to recruit with Marie Louise, in whose service his employment was a mere sinecure."¹

These powers, directed by a keen and well-trained mind, and propelled by a determined will, enabled him to grapple with all the details of a vast administration; so that he became the original of St. Simon's "crowned industrial," replacing feudal narrowness and courtly nonchalance by a world-embracing and world-compelling intelligence. Compare Napoleon's Government with the distracting dualism prevalent at Berlin up to 1807, or with Hapsburg pedantries, or British conservatism, and the marvel of the Napoleonic supremacy is explained. It is the supremacy of reason over tradition, of energy over supineness.

The motives on which he relied for securing enthusiastic service were patriotism, devotion to his person, love of glory, and, in the last resort, fear. I need say nothing about the patriotism of the French. It was never more ardent than after the triumphs of the revolutionary arms; and Napoleon became the

¹ Méneval, "Méms.," i, 405; Las Cases, "Mémorial," vi, 272 (25th September 1816).

magnet attracting this errant enthusiasm. It is the characteristic of a powerful nature to call forth intense devotion; and never has man been so devotedly served as Napoleon. That sentiment throbs in every page of the *Memoirs of Méneval*. On one occasion the Emperor unjustly accused him of frequenting the masked ball of the Opera and another resort where his opponents were to be found. He chid him harshly for this, but, seeing his secretary neither blench nor falter, again accorded his unlimited confidence, which Méneval faithfully repaid. Sweet-tempered, quiet, and extremely reserved, he was fitted by nature to be the dog-like companion of a man of genius; and a convincing proof of the greatness of Napoleon lies in the uniformly favourable estimate left by his secretary. As for the devotion of the troops, it littered the half of Europe with their bones, from Cadiz to Moscow. But there are two incidents of special pathos recorded by officers who took part in the Moscow campaign. The duc de Fezensac, aide-de-camp to Berthier, relates that, while the Grand Army was half-starving at Moscow, Napoleon held a review at the Kremlin, and the men pulled themselves together so pluckily and presented so fine an appearance as completely to hide their misery. Indeed, the aspect of the army was such as to convince him that with such troops he could go anywhere and do anything. The other incident refers to the ghastly scenes of the retreat from the Beresina to Vilna. Sergeant Bourgogne relates that, when men were perishing nightly by the insufficient camp-fires, some would hand sticks to Napo-

leon's servants, with the words, "Take them for the Emperor."¹

Napoleon's personality and his phenomenal energy were a constant appeal for civic devotion. Take these thrilling words to his young brother Jerome Bonaparte at the beginning of his naval career: "You may die young, but not if you have lived without glory, useless to the fatherland, and leaving no trace of your existence; for that is not to have lived at all." Then again, when Jerome left his ship without permission, in order to marry Miss Paterson of Baltimore, Napoleon's wrath was kindled as much by the breach of naval discipline as by the *mésalliance*. Ordering that the bride should at once be sent back to America, he wrote thus to Madame Mère about the bridegroom: "I shall treat this young man severely if he shows himself unworthy of the name he bears, during the only interview I shall grant him, if he persists in carrying on his *liaison*. If he shows no inclination to wash away the dishonour with which he has stained my name by forsaking his country's flag on land and sea, for the sake of a wretched woman, I will cast him off for ever. I may make him an example which will teach young soldiers the sacredness of their duty, and the enormity of the crime they commit when they forsake their flag for a woman."² We cannot but pity the young bride, whose future was thus cruelly blighted; but much may be said in defence of Napoleon's action

¹ Fezensac, "Campagne de Russie," ch. iii; Bourgogne, "Méms.," ch. viii.

² Lecestre, "Lettres inédites de Nap.," i, 48.

in upholding the laws of France and the discipline of the navy, which Jerome had broken.

The standard and the eagle were held up to special veneration. The grant of the colours to the troops was the occasion of a magnificent display early in the Empire. It always took place with *éclat*. Early in the campaign of 1813 a recruit felt the inspiration that thrilled in Napoleon's words, when, rising in his stirrups, he hurled at the regiment the appeal to swear to defend the colours. "I felt, as we all felt, that he snatched from our very navel the cry—'Yes; we swear.'" Owing to this spirit of devotion to the flag, regiments let themselves be cut up rather than surrender the symbol of their own and their country's honour; witness the splendid fight made by the 14th line regiment at Eylau when cut off from its supports and left standing alone on a hillock with swarms of Cossacks around;¹ or the even more marvellous defence of a battalion of Breton National Guards, at la Fère Champenoise in 1814, against repeated charges of cavalry, until they were finally cut to pieces rather than surrender. Such exploits betoken superhuman bravery; and it is this which in the last resort wins battles. In November 1806 the citizens of Berlin looked with astonishment at the little fellows of Davout's corps who had beaten the splendid Prussian Guards, physically far their superior, not knowing

¹ Marbot's "Mémoires," ch. xxix. I do not credit Marbot's account of his ride out to the 14th and back, when a whole battalion of the Old Guard opened fire on him and failed to hit either him or his mare!

that, apart from generalship, it is the spirit pervading the army which makes its fighting power. As Napoleon said: "In war *morale* and opinion are more than half the battle."¹

These considerations explain the fury of the Emperor at a capitulation. After a naval encounter little creditable to his flag, he declared in burning words that a navy was mere timber and hemp unless officers and men were animated by sentiments of honour leading them to die rather than accept a rebuff. Again, to Decrès, Minister of Marine, he burst out with the invective: "Your Villeneuve is not fit to command a frigate," because Villeneuve after the action of 22nd July 1805 off Cape Finisterre did not struggle on towards Boulogne, but put back to Cadiz. Still more terrible was his rage at hearing of the first great disaster to the French arms on land, the surrender of General Dupont with 22,800 men to the Spaniards at Baylen on 21st July 1808. He might well be angry. Hitherto he had believed the Spanish rising of 1808 to be the work of monks, peasants, and a few hot-heads in the towns. Bessièrès' victory at Medina da Rio Seco, a week before, had seemed to him the end of the rebellion. "No battle," so he wrote to Bessièrès, "was ever gained in more important circumstances: it decides matters in Spain."² And now Baylen upset everything. "Read these documents," he wrote to Clarke, Minister of War, "and you will see that from the beginning of the world there never was anything so stupid, so silly, so cowardly. This

¹ "Nap. Corresp.," xix, 570.

² *Ibid.*, xvii, 401.

justifies the Macks, the Hohenlohes, etc. I wish to know what tribunals are to try these generals, and what punishments the laws inflict on such a crime." In order to exact punishment from Dupont and his chief officers, he went to the Council of State with a decree regulating the procedure of the court-martial. He spoke to the Council vehemently, with the tears in his eyes, enumerating the resources open to that unfortunate general even in the last desperate moments; and then he exclaimed: "Yes, the elder Horace, in Corneille's play, is right, when, being asked what his flying son could have done (in the fight one against three) he says: 'He might have died'; or, he adds, 'he might have called a noble despair to his rescue.' Little," continued Napoleon, "do they know of human nature who find fault with Corneille, and pretend that he has weakened the effect of the first exclamation by that which follows."¹ These examples of heroism, together with the disgrace attending surrender, produced the soldiery glorified by Heine in 'The Two Grenadiers.' In real life they stand forth on the slope of la Belle Alliance on the night of 18th June 1815, animated by Cambronne's immortal words: "The Guard dies and does not surrender."

Where Napoleon could not inspire devotion he struck fear. He had the poor opinion of human nature which prevails among politicians; and we must remember that at the close of a violent Revolution men show their worst side. The bullies and intriguers are apt to come out at the top, vaulting over their more

¹ Pelet, *op. cit.*, p. 9; Corneille, "Horace," act. iii, sc. 6.

virtuous and consistent comrades. Napoleon had lived through that time, which, as we saw, sapped the idealism of his youth and imbued him with hard and cynical notions. Thenceforth he sought to find out the weak and bad points of men, and in general he exaggerated them. As a Councillor of State observed, "Napoleon, looking down from the vast height which he had reached, thought the rest of mankind smaller than they really were; and this was the cause of his downfall." There is a deep truth in this. A man who despises the human race will end by alienating it.

There was something in the countenance of Napoleon which produced fear, or at least apprehension. He could be gracious, charming; but the change to a frown on that serene brow, to a flash of anger from those caressing eyes, came with southern suddenness, so that the most prudent were ever on their guard, and the strongest felt a presentiment of lurking danger. One of the English travellers detained at Nancy by Napoleon's orders described his face as denoting good sense and mildness, though accompanied by haughtiness. The eyes expressed profound meditation. But on Napoleon's return to Paris some ten weeks later, after the campaign of Austerlitz, his look and bearing betokened arrogance so visibly as to daunt all the bystanders, the victor being clearly resolved to keep the people at arm's length.¹

A similar change occurred after all his great campaigns: and at the climax of the Empire all the

¹ W. T. Williams, "State of France" (1802-6), ii, 130.

ingenuity of courtiers went to gratifying the whims of the master. Alexandre Duval has described how, during the reading of a drama to a circle of the friends of Queen Hortense in her salon, they were startled by the entrance of Napoleon, unannounced. At once the company sprang up, and, forming a line, stood at attention with all the promptitude of a company of troops. One of the Marshals also confessed to a feeling of terror at Court, so soon as the cry "L'Empereur," was raised. His feelings were not exceptional; for he knew several "fine fellows" who trembled in all their limbs on these occasions. General Vandamme, a very swashbuckler, confessed that in the presence of Napoleon he lost command of himself and became a prey to feelings of confusion which were the nearest approach he knew to fear. Finally, note the following incident as typical of Napoleon's influence over the other sex. At the Court at Dresden in May 1812 when he marched before the line of bowing ladies, the gentlemen who stood behind them noticed that, as the great man passed along, a deep flush of agitation spread from shoulder to shoulder, producing, so we may conjecture, a picturesque crescendo and diminuendo in carmine.¹

Ultimately it proved to be a misfortune for Napoleon that he inspired so general an apprehension. A masterful nature is the better for intelligent and manly criticism. Mme. de Staël early saw that Bonaparte respected an outspoken opponent. So far back as the year 1798 she noted an instance in which he was taken

¹ Vandal, "Napoléon et Alexandre I," iii, 418.

aback by a spirited answer. Going up to a lady in the *Salon*, who was admired for her beauty and vivacity, he said with singular frankness: "Madame, I do not like women meddling with politics." "You are right, General," she replied; "but in a country where their heads are cut off, they naturally want to know why." Bonaparte made no reply. "He is a man," continued Mme. de Staël, "who is quieted by real resistance: those who have endured his despotism are as much to blame as he himself is."¹ There is a deep truth in this. Firm opposition calls forth the best qualities of a strong man. Failing to meet with opposition, he is apt to run to excess. Now, as we saw in Lecture I, Napoleon could at need display surprising self-command even under great provocation. On such occasions probably astonishment held him spell-bound in the first moments, thus giving time for the play of the sentiment of justice which generally prescribed his conduct; for, as he once said: "I may be a hard man; but at bottom I am a just man." Another moderating influence was a strong man's admiration for strength in others. With his keen sense of personal honour, he could not but respect the same sentiment in those whom he annoyed; and, always regarding men as instruments for his service, he sought to enlist their enthusiastic support. Well would it have been for him and for Europe if he had met with the same courageous opposition in his Council Chamber. But it was the bane of France that the Revolution killed off the most consistent and courageous leaders, leaving

¹ Mme. de Staël, "La Rév. Française," bk. iii, ch. xv.

behind only men of the second rank or mere trimmers.

It must not be supposed that the Council of State ever wholly acquiesced in this administrative despotism. Cormenin, the historian of that body, thus describes its disapproval, if not its resistance: "How often has not the Council done good service to the people in tempering the fiery bursts of their chief by the wisdom and calm of their deliberations? What can be imagined more impressive, or indeed more eloquent, than those long intervals of profound silence which occurred from time to time in the Council? And how often did not honourable and truly public spirited members boldly advocate the cause of virtue and freedom, even in the presence of the monarch himself, and amidst the servile murmurs of less generous spirits?"¹

This attitude was certainly dignified; but the outcome of it, so far as concerned France, was imperceptible. After the Treaty of Tilsit, which made Napoleon master of Europe, he dissolved the Tribunate as useless. With equally good logic all the other legislative bodies might have gone; for the will of the Emperor, working through the Privy Council and the ministerial departments, held unbridled sway. He cared little whether officials were popular or not. In fact he often kept in office an unpopular Minister or Prefect on the ground that such an one had no other refuge than in him, and therefore would be faithful. The Argus-eyed Emperor surveyed every action,

¹ Cormenin, "Du Conseil d'Etat," p. 33.

every report from the standpoint—"Does it imply devotion to me?" This vigilance was not relaxed even during distant campaigns. "From the midst of his camps, and amidst military operations, he was resolved," says Mollien, "not only to govern, but to administer France; and he succeeded."¹ A typical example of this decisive mastery of civil affairs when in the midst of war is seen in his varied work on the eve of the Battle of Austerlitz. After explaining his plan of battle to his leading officers, he turned aside to dictate the organization of the large boarding school at St. Denis, which received a number of daughters of the members of the Legion of Honour. Napoleon drew up its rules, which guided that institution for many years, in an hour or two that he snatched from work at the multifarious details connected with the great battle on the following day.²

As a result of these multiform activities there was built up the most far-reaching despotism that Europe has seen since the days of the Roman Empire. Napoleon summed up his ideas of the function of government in a simile which grandly expressed his sense of the political kosmos which he had created. "Government," he said to Mollien, "plays the part of the sun in the social system, whose various bodies should revolve around this central luminary, each keeping strictly to its own orbit." Yes; he himself was the central orb, and his will was the law of gravitation

¹ Mollien, "*Méms.*," ii, 75.

² Pelet, ch. i.

which kept Ministers, Marshals, Legislature, Prefects, rotating in their several orbits, the slightest deviation being instantly checked by a flash of wrath from the sun-god. To him and him alone all were answerable. The lesser authorities, which since the days of old Rome, had checked the absolutism of emperors and kings were no longer in existence; and this raised him high above his predecessors. Charlemagne, Charles V, Henry VIII of England, Peter the Great, Frederick the Great, were face to face with diverse barriers, tribal, local, constitutional, aristocratic, or bureaucratic. Napoleon dominated a land whence the leveling tide of equality had swept away every barrier in order to give effect to the supremacy of the general will; and now, a decade later, the reaction against the unnatural attempt to merge the individual in an equalized mass helped to raise aloft a great personality in whom the individual achieved a signal revenge, an unchallenged triumph.

He believed himself called to further the reaction towards order and monarchy. In the spring of 1814, when the sovereigns of Europe were preparing to invade France, he said to Chaptal: "Wretches! They do not see that I have crushed Revolutions, and have worked twenty years to consolidate monarchy. They will see that after me they will be too weak to stay the torrent, which in ten years will sweep them all away." At times even in the heyday of the Empire he declared that it would pass away with him. "All this will last while I hold out," so he once said to the Council of State; "but, when I am gone, my son may

call himself lucky if he has a couple of thousand a year."¹

This feeling of apprehension, natural to an eager and nervous temperament, explains the impetuosity of his onset against all enemies, internal or foreign, in the hope of crushing all opposition during his reign. Certainly the attempt to found monarchy on the basis of a renovated society was a great and inspiring idea, which has had noteworthy results. The impulse imparted by his public works to material prosperity can scarcely be overestimated. To this task he applied himself unceasingly; and his keen eye for geography no less than his discernment of the elemental needs of mankind enabled him to mark out the lines of development for the communications and commerce of France and a large part of Europe. Postponing to Lecture VII a brief description of his plans for other lands, we may here glance at the chief of those which furthered the prosperity of France.

His admiration of the Caesars naturally led him to study their methods of administration, notably the system of roads which assured direct communication between Rome and the chief provincial capitals, thus binding together the Empire both in war and peace. Napoleon in fancy saw himself the conqueror and pacificator of all neighbouring lands; and the road or canal was, in a material sense, the chief instrument of his rule. He greatly improved the roads leading to the exposed borders of his Empire, especially those

¹ Chaptal, "Souvenirs," p. 320; Pelet, xviii.

from Paris to Cologne, Mainz, and Strassburg, as also that skirting the left bank of the Rhine from Mainz to Cologne. So, too, the roads over the Mont Cenis, Mont Genève and Simplon Passes were made practicable for armies with cannon, and tunnels were constructed where there was danger from avalanches. After establishing Eugène as Viceroy of Italy at Milan, he informed him that the roads and the service of couriers must be improved so that a despatch could go between Paris and Milan in five days.¹ While preparing for the invasion of England, Napoleon assigned the chief importance to the roads from Paris to Boulogne, Cherbourg, and Brest, those leading from the capital to Turin, Toulon and the Spanish frontier ranking in the second place; while those to Strassburg and Cologne (*viâ* Brussels) were of small account. Afterwards, of course, this order was altered, and the roads to the Rhine and the Simplon held the first place in his thoughts, the annexation of Canton Valais in 1810 being largely due to his desire to control the Simplon road (completed in 1807) in the valley of the Upper Rhone. All over France the impulse of the great organizer sufficed greatly to improve the communications. The improvement was all the more striking because the Revolution, after sweeping away the patriarchial system of the *corvée*, had replaced it by nothing effective.

In the year 1793 the Revolutionists had adopted a very important means of sending news, the semaphore telegraph, an invention of an engineer, Claude Chappe.

¹ "Nap. Corresp.," xi, 37.

Lanterns were attached to the arms by night, so that both by night and day messages could be sent from one signal post to another provided that they were not more than $7\frac{1}{2}$ miles apart. By these means tidings came quickly along the first line, from Lille to Paris. Napoleon greatly extended this useful device, connecting Paris with Brest on the west, on the east with Hünigen, as also with Milan *viâ* Lyons. Owing to the risk of discovery of the code of signals, Napoleon seems to have trusted to couriers for matters of high policy. In 1805 Lavalette, his Postmaster-General, organized a plan by which postillions carried the despatches at high speed from stage to stage, registering the time of arrival and departure in an official book. This plan saved both time and money. Thenceforth Napoleon received an answer back from the Viceroy at Milan in eight days, and from Naples in fifteen days. This excellent system largely contributed to his successes.¹

The canal system of France received an immense development under the Emperor. Up to his time France had fallen behind England in this respect. Brindley's Bridgwater Canal and other ventures had been a great success; and early in the nineteenth century important works, such as the Caledonian Canal and the Leeds and Liverpool Canal, were either planned or actually begun. It has been stated that few canals existed in France before Napoleon.² This is unjust to Colbert and other able Ministers, who

¹ Lavalette, "Méms.," ch. xxiv.

² "Cambridge Modern History," ix, 119.

not only designed but carried out the Orleans Canal and the Languedoc Canal, uniting the upper Garonne to the Mediterranean. In all there were about 500 miles of canals in France at the end of the eighteenth century. Napoleon constructed about 1,200 miles, thus uniting all the chief river systems of France. The most important were those connecting the Scheldt with the Oise *viâ* St. Quentin, which in 1810 first brought the coal of Belgium cheaply to Paris; also that from Strassburg to the River Saone, more than 200 miles in length. Paris, Lyons, and other large towns were now able to export goods and receive food more cheaply and expeditiously than before, a circumstance highly favourable to political calm. Both to Chaptal and to Roederer Napoleon confessed his dread of riots brought about by hunger, and his unconcern about merely political movements. In the latter case, said he, "I would use grape shot without pity, and with 1,200 men and four cannon would drive all Paris back to its shops." But he feared the fierce moods of a hungry people, and used to pay out considerable sums to keep large firms employed. On more than one occasion this device succeeded. Chaptal also held in reserve large stores of corn at Paris to sell at low prices in case of need.¹ Several of Napoleon's letters bear on the subject of bringing corn easily and cheaply to Paris by canal or river; and on 6th March 1805 he proposed to utilize for small barges the Ourcq aque-

¹ Chaptal, "Souvenirs," 59, 286-291. These devices were evidently borrowed from the late Roman Republic and the Empire.

duct, which was designed to bring drinking water to Paris from the district north of Meaux.

The original proposal for the Ourcq aqueduct came about in a characteristic way. While conversing with Chaptal in the garden at Malmaison, where so many important matters were discussed, Napoleon uttered these words: "My intention is to make Paris the most beautiful capital in the world. I wish that in ten years its population shall number 2,000,000." Where to Chaptal replied that so large a population could not be improvised, even by a great sovereign who made that city his residence and the centre of art, science, and industry. To support 2,000,000 people there must be plentiful means of bringing in food and distributing the products of industry, both of which were insufficient at Paris. Louis XIV had conceived the grand idea of turning part of the waters of the Loire into the Seine, in order to render it navigable for a longer period, and to bring to the capital the produce of the centre of France. At present, continued Chaptal, 1,000,000 people were fed with difficulty. It was far better, then, to allow population to regulate itself by natural law. "Good," said Napoleon, "these reasons are solid: but I wish to do something both great and useful for Paris. What are your ideas on this subject?" "Give it water." "Bah! water! There are several fountains and a great river in Paris." In reply, Chaptal pointed out that drinking water was scarce and dear, each small household having to pay two sous for the two pails that were needed every day. Further, there were no drinking

troughs and no means of watering the streets. When Napoleon pressed him for a remedy, he suggested two means, the latter being to bring the water of the River Ourcq by aqueduct down the valley of the Marne to la Villette, whence it could be spread over Paris. At once Napoleon replied: "I adopt the latter project: when you go home send for M. Gauthey, and tell him to set 500 men to work to-morrow at la Villette to dig the canal."¹

At first sight the advantages of an intelligent autocracy over a system of sub-committees, committees, and parliamentary Bills, seem overwhelming; but Chaptal states that even the great autocrat could not move at that pace. Gauthey, the engineer, insisted on surveying the ground before the 500 men began to cut the trench; and another delay happened owing to the Emperor's desire to combine the supply of drinking water to Paris with barge traffic,² a notion which throws light on the hygienic notions prevalent a little more than a century ago. Napoleon's interest in the Ourcq scheme appears in the following incident. While hunting in the Forest of Bondy, he came across the aqueduct, and found to his great annoyance that the work was for the time suspended. At once he stopped the hunt, returned to Paris, and ordered all

¹ Chaptal, "Souvenirs," pp. 357-359; Lanzac de Laborie, "Paris sous Napoléon," pt. ii, p. 303, quotes Passy, "Frochot," pp. 485-487, as claiming that Frochot, Prefect of the Seine, first suggested the Ourcq scheme.

² "Nap. Corresp.," x, 193. Lanzac de Laborie, pt. ii (pp. 311-312), states that in 1810-1811 epidemics of fever were due to the impurity of the Ourcq water.

those who were responsible to meet him on that evening. We can imagine the reception which awaited them.¹

On another occasion Napoleon insisted on the commencement of work before the plans were begun. Not long before midnight he sent for his architect, Fontaine, and ordered him on the next day to take 500 men to prepare for the construction of a triumphal arch in the Place du Carrousel in honour of the army. In vain did the architect represent that he had neither an estimate nor a plan on which to work. Napoleon insisted that he must begin on the next morning. Great, then, was the surprise of Duroc, Grand Marshal of the Palace, to see the 500 men beginning excavations. At once he sent to upbraid Daru for not warning him; but Daru was equally in the dark. They then sent for Fontaine, who solved the riddle, whereupon all three set to work with all speed to design the famous Carrousel arch, the foundations of which were already being dug.

These are examples of a nervous activity which kept all Napoleon's Ministers and officials on the stretch, and made the political world tense with expectation as to what next would happen. Such a system had its merits among a people whose brain had been over excited by abstract ideas and faction fights. Napoleon subjected France to a mental rest-cure and a strenuous training for the muscles. The change was not unlike that which happens to nervous over-taught youths, fresh from the *lycée*, and perhaps

¹ "Méms. de Savary" (Duc de Rovigo), i, 444.

prone to Anarchism, when they come under the drill-sergeant for a year or more. Where previously everything went to feed the brain, now the muscles demand the chief share; and the restless, questioning student becomes a dully obedient recruit. Doubtless France needed a change in this direction; but it was so sudden as to upset the balance of her faculties, leaving her passive when she should have asserted her will betimes.

The material gains were very great. Paris was beautified and enriched. The Louvre became the centre of the world's art treasures. Napoleon planned and constructed four bridges, Austerlitz, Jena, the Arts, and Sèvres: he had pavements or footways made for very many streets (only three had them before 1789), and he planned the streets named Rivoli, Castiglione, de la Paix, and des Pyramides. Notre Dame was also cleared of several buildings which hid it, or choked the approaches. Baron Haussmann under Napoleon III said that he found Paris brick and left it marble; but the change had begun with Napoleon I and Chaptal. The latter claims that he proposed all the plans for the beautifying of Paris. That is an exaggeration. The great impulse came from Napoleon; Chaptal was but his instrument.¹

The great city of Lyons was much in Napoleon's thoughts. Indeed, he is said to have preferred it to Paris.² He sought to stimulate its silk industry by a

¹ Chaptal, p. 59; Lanzac de Laborie, pt. ii, pp. 113-124, 131-141.

² Lanzac de Laborie, pt. ii, p. 88. See, too, "Revue des deux Mondes," 15th May 1912.

rigid protective system, which the traders of that town highly appreciated; and, as the bounds of the French Empire were widened, a far larger market was opened for the products of the Lyonnais in the Low Countries, North Germany and the greater part of Italy. In times of dearth or of temporary crisis he sought by purchases of goods to foster the industries of Lyons and other large towns, with the result that Lyons accorded to him a most enthusiastic reception on his return from Elba in 1815. The masses in France have always shown strongly protectionist leanings; and by furthering a "national" system of commerce he appealed to them strongly. In March 1806, when there was some prospect of a peace with England he said to the Council of State—"Within forty-eight hours after the peace with England is concluded, I shall prohibit the introduction of all foreign produce, and promulgate a Navigation Act, which will exclude from our ports all foreign vessels: ships, besides being built of French timber, shall have two-thirds of their crews French—Even English coals and English 'milords' shall not come to our shores, but under the French flag. A great outcry will be raised at first, because a very bad spirit pervades the French commercial world; but in the course of six years afterwards, we shall be enjoying the greatest prosperity." Shortly before that he said, "My system of finance consists in establishing a vast number of indirect taxes, the tariff or scale of which shall be extremely moderate, and thus be susceptible of being augmented in proportion to the necessities of the State; 650

million francs (£26,000,000) are sufficient for me at this moment, but I wish to have the power to augment the revenue in an instant by 100,000,000 (£4,000,000) in the event of a war breaking out. I possess resources, however, which my successors will not be able to command, and I must think of them as well as myself."¹ His system of indirect taxation soon became very burdensome; and he afterwards allowed that *les droits réunis* rendered him highly unpopular. It was, however, the high rates, not the principle of the taxes that was odious. France was never more protectionist at heart than during the Consulate and Empire. Manufacturers welcomed the almost prohibitive measures of the Continental System.

Certainly that System, especially in and after the year 1810, imposed terrible losses on Great Britain; and, as the exchange was 30 per cent. against her in monetary transactions Napoleon expected a speedy collapse of credit at London. By all possible means he sought to encourage his Allies to persevere in the struggle so as to break the maritime yoke of England; and by harping skilfully on this theme he succeeded in imposing for a time the fiscal decrees of the latter part of 1810, which brought terrible hardships on the vassal States, especially those of the North of Europe. As Mollien says, the most extraordinary episode of Napoleon's career is his persistence in carrying out this burdensome policy, so that one knows not whether to wonder most at the audacity of the Emperor's com-

¹ Pelet, ch. xxiii. See, too, "Méms. de Gaudin, Duc de Gaëte," I, ch. ii-v.

binations, or the resignation and submission with which for a time they were accepted. The experiment would of course have been impossible but for the profound ignorance of Political Economy then prevalent in nearly all circles. Napoleon doubtless expected that the extension of national commerce within the wide bounds of the French Empire would make up for the loss of oversea commerce; but the event signally falsified his hopes, and may be considered the fundamental cause why Russia, Sweden, and most of the Continental States successively turned against him in 1812-13.¹

To the end of his days Napoleon remained a "Mercantilist," witness his declaration to Gourgaud at St. Helena on 19th September 1817: "The English are stupid. In their place I would have stipulated in the last treaties that I alone should be able to sail and trade in the seas of China and the (East) Indies. It is absurd to leave Batavia to the Dutch and the Isle of Bourbon to the French. . . . The Americans ought no longer to be allowed to sail in the China Sea. At present, when France no longer exists, the English can with 30 sail-of-the-line blockade all the coasts of America. . . . The United States are nothing; at present England can give the law to the world, especially by withdrawing her troops from the Continent . . . and remaining solely a Sea Power. Then she would do what she liked."² We must be-

¹ For further details see my chapter on The Continental System in the "Cambridge Modern History," vol. ix.

² Gourgaud, "Journal," ii, 315.

ware of taking this statement too seriously. The native vehemence of Napoleon often drove him further than he intended. As Mollien says: "His *élan* used to carry him beyond the prescribed goal."¹ The prudent reader will allow almost as wide a margin to Napoleon in his headlong moods as to Carlyle, when that champion of sincerity and silence discoursed at large upon Yankee-land, cant, Philistines, and respectability which kept its gig. Nevertheless, it is fairly clear that the Emperor's economic ideals were those of the age of Louis XIV and of Colbert. He sought to develop France and her vassal States by splendid enterprises, the aim being to make his Empire a self-sufficing unit, able to do without the sugar of the West Indies, or the silks and dyes of the East, and thus give the law to its rivals. So far as human energy and perseverance could achieve the task, he succeeded; and important industries, notably that of the sugar beet-root, attested the resourcefulness which he evoked. Never has any man so vigorously compelled a whole Continent to fall back upon itself and develop its latent powers. He failed; but the enterprise is invested with a Titanic grandeur, characteristic of the man and of the age on which he set his imprint.

Napoleon sought to regulate not only commerce, industry, and the policy and mechanism of a great Empire, but also to dictate the course of public opinion. The task of guiding the French intellect after it had

¹ Mollien, "Méms.," iii, 315.

attained to precocious maturity at the time of the Revolution was perhaps not the least of his Herculean toils. But we must remember that the French brain, jaded by the excitements of that time, had submitted to various regulations successively imposed by the Convention and the Directory. Governmental control of the Press was deemed necessary in order to steer the ship of State safely between the Scylla of royalism and the Charybdis of anarchy; so that Napoleon inherited a system highly favourable to the régime of *le juste milieu* which he at first personified. From the beginning of the Consulate he resolved strictly to control the Press. By the decree of 17th January 1800, the three Consuls swept away as many as sixty newspapers and allowed only thirteen to survive, subject to a censorship. No new journal could appear without direct permission; and from that time Bonaparte ordered his librarian to keep a close watch on all books, pamphlets, and placards.¹

His letters on the Press often reveal his mania for managing men and affairs. On 30th May 1805, he writes to Fouché from Milan, respecting the first rumours of Russian resentment at the changes in North Italy: "The newspapers must not be permitted to take a line favourable to Russia, to that corrupt, weak, and silly Cabinet. At this moment, indeed, it is showing some spirit, but more from a feeling that it can do nothing, than from any other. A contrast must be drawn with the shameful position of the English. They must be compared to a besieged fortress. . . .

¹ Welschinger, "La Censure, etc.," pp. 20 *et seq.*

Have caricatures made—an Englishman, purse in hand, entreating the various Powers to take his money. This is the real direction to give the whole business!" In the following spring Napoleon reduces the few remaining newspapers to the position of mouth-piece of the Foreign Office. On 6th March 1806 he writes to Talleyrand: "My intention is that the political articles of the *Moniteur* shall be written by the Foreign Office. And at the end of a month, after seeing how they are done, I will forbid the other Journals to talk politics except by copying the articles of the *Moniteur*."

Imagine, then, the sensation in the official world when the following passage from the pen of Chateaubriand appeared in the *Mercure de France*: "The Muse has often depicted crimes, but in the language of the poet there is something so fine that even crimes are embellished by it. Only the historian can describe them without weakening their horror. When amidst abject silence, no sound is heard but the chain of the slave and the voice of the informer; when all tremble before the tyrant and it is as dangerous to meet with his favour as to merit disgrace, then appears the historian, charged with the vengeance of the peoples. In vain does Nero prosper; for Tacitus is already born in the Empire." This daring passage appeared on 4th July 1807, three days before the Treaty of Tilsit. Chateaubriand states in his Memoirs that Napoleon on reading the passage remarked: "Does Chateaubriand think me a fool, who does not understand him? I will have him sabred on the steps of the

Tuilleries." For the present the Emperor put an extra censor to watch that paper; and on 14th August, after his return to France, wrote as follows: "Those who have taken up the Bourbon cause, directly or indirectly, should remember their Scripture history and what David (Jehu is meant) did to the house of Ahab. This observation applies also to Chateaubriand and his clique."¹

On 21st May 1808, after the rising of the men of Madrid against the French army of occupation, the Emperor warns Fouché that the Paris papers must not say anything about that event except according to the cue given by the official *Moniteur*; namely, that only twenty-five Frenchmen perished, while the Spaniards who lost their lives were "all sedition-mongers or rioters of the lower class." On 26th July 1809 while at Schönbrunn he orders Fouché to depose and imprison for one month the editor of the *Gazette de France* for publishing an indiscreet article. He adds by way of rebuke to Fouché: "It really is as if the police did not know how to read. They attend to nothing." As for Napoleon, even while at Schönbrunn, he attends to everything. No leading article escapes his Argus eyes. On 5th February 1810 he subjects the French Press to even stricter supervision; and in order to keep printing under control he limits the number of printers in Paris to sixty, who are required to take an oath of obedience and good conduct. Finally in the autumn of 1811 the last four newspapers in Paris are absorbed by the Government;

¹ Lecestre, "Lettres inédites de Nap.," i, 100.

and during three years the French Press virtually ceases to exist.

Very characteristic was his treatment of Mme. de Staël. There was a natural antipathy between them. At first, it is true, she adored him; but she soon swung round to the opposite extreme, and in her "Considerations" declared that she felt his nature to be that of cold cutting steel, which numbed the wound it made. He on his side disliked her as embodying his two pet aversions, an enthusiastic *idéologue* and an appallingly eloquent woman. It was inevitable that, even during the Consulate, he should put forty leagues between him and that terrible tongue. After several vain efforts to effect a truce, the gifted authoress ventured to reside about forty leagues from Paris in order to supervise the publication of *de l'Allemagne*. Having avoided the least reference to politics either in France or Germany, she hoped that the book would run the gauntlet even of the law of 5th February 1810. At first Napoleon was inclined to let it appear, suppressing however the passage about the Duke of Brunswick and "three fourths of the passages in which she exalts England."¹ But on second thoughts he condemned the whole work; and his valet, Constant, states that he threw it in the fire. Certain it is that he himself ordered Savary to suppress the book, though now in

¹ Lecestre, "Lettres inédites de Nap.," ii, 74, Napoleon to Savary, 28th September 1810. M. Paul Gautier ("Mme. de Staël et Napoléon," p. 256) has disproved the assertion of Napoleon at Elba that Savary was responsible for the suppression of the book.

print. Savary therefore informed her that it was evident the air of France did not at all agree with her: "And we are not yet reduced to seek models in the people whom you admire. Your last work is not at all French. I have stopped the printing of it." Within a week she was to leave France.

This incident is typical of Napoleon's conduct towards writers who maintained an independent attitude. He required not only no opposition but an active support, even in times when he was suppressing freedom of speech. Such a claim was repugnant to all independent thinkers. No great writer will write to order; and thus the Empire was adorned by no literary productions of lasting merit, except those of Chateaubriand and Mme. de Staël whom he drove into opposition. Thought being stifled, the perennial energies of Frenchmen expressed themselves in military exploits, architectural triumphs, and industrial developments. Never has a reaction towards the practical come so swiftly. In the years 1789-93 France simmered with new thoughts and heaved with political and social experiments. The decade of the Napoleonic supremacy saw her thought cowed, her multiform energies embodied in a constitution, decrees, codes, and military enterprises emanating from the will of one man.¹

¹ In June 1789 Arthur Young noted that every hour there appeared a new pamphlet from the shops of the Palais Royal. "Thirteen came out to-day, sixteen yesterday, and ninety-two last week; . . . nineteen-twentieths of these productions are in favour of liberty . . . and not the least step is taken by the Court to restrain this extreme licentiousness of production." A. Young, "Travels in France," p. 153 (Bohn edit.).

The suppression of freedom in the Press and in Literature took place at a time when Napoleon was absolute master of France and of Central Europe, and when, to all appearance, his dynasty was firmly founded. On his return from the Wagram campaign he prepared to crown the imperial edifice by divorcing Joséphine. To put her away for not having borne him a child seems a callous proceeding; but in that case State policy determined his conduct and overpowered his private feelings, which were still those of affection, if not love, for his consort. All things considered, I think he deserves less censure in this episode than has often been bestowed on him. A great ruler must think first of the stability of his State and the future of his dynasty, which would be more assured in the person of a son than a nephew. Further, his interests counselled an alliance with one of the old dynasties. Towards her successor, Marie Louise of Austria, he proved to be a fond and almost doting spouse; and it is ever to his credit that at the time of the birth of the long-wished-for heir, when there seemed a danger that either the life of the mother or of the babe should be sacrificed, he bade the physicians assure that of the mother. Nothing in his career redounds more to his credit than that decision.

As happened at every time of triumph (for the coming of a son crowned his career) Napoleon drew tighter the reins of power at home, and at the close of the year 1810 extended his Empire to the Baltic by annexing N.W. Germany and the Free Cities of Hamburg

and Lübeck. The question now arises—Could he hold together that overgrown realm, comprising all the lands between the North Sea and the Roman Campagna? Probably there was only one method, namely, by ruling with extreme clemency and tact. A relaxation of the oppressive decrees of the Continental System, of the Press laws, and, if possible, of taxes, would have made for content and stability. France and the world at large needed rest and recreation. But there was something in Napoleon's nature which scorned the thought of rest. At this very time taxes, Press laws, the Continental System, became more burdensome than ever. Further, as will appear in Lecture VII, Napoleon refused either to pacify the Spaniards, or humour the Czar, and chose to treat the captive Pope Pius VII, with an indignity that alienated the support of devout Catholics won over by the Concordat.

This febrile restlessness, this incapacity to let well alone, has been ascribed to various causes. Some persons refer it to the epileptic symptoms now and again apparent in gasping breath and nervous collapse; others allege a secret and insidious malady that affected the whole organism and impaired the judgment. On this subject we can only conjecture. Certain it is that at the time when the sun-god should have unstrung his bow, he kept it tense, threatening alike London, Cadiz, Moscow. He lacked that easy aloofness, which now and again has led great sovereigns to shrug their shoulders and let the world go its way. To his soldiers he would unbend, for at heart he was always one of them; and therefore they loved him to

the end. But civilians wanted repose, relaxation; and these boons his unrelenting earnestness denied.

The gay nonchalance of the French nature was alien to him. He had not that unfailing humour which led Charles II, on his death-bed, to apologize to his courtiers for being so unconscionably long in dying. Still less would the Emperor have laughed at caricatures aimed at him, as Frederick the Great once did when riding down Unter den Linden. Approaching the daub, he called out to his groom: "Hang it lower so that they need not crane their necks to see it." And he rode away amidst shouts of "Der König soll leben." Napoleon would probably have had the caricaturist imprisoned and made a hero of him. For, with all his fine qualities, he could not treat little episodes with the airy grace of a humourist. On one occasion he threatened Talleyrand that if he (Napoleon) died first, Talleyrand should not survive. To which the Minister replied: "Sire, the warning was not needed to make me pray for long life for your Majesty." Here was Napoleon's weak point. He had not that sense of ironical detachment which bids a man pause, smile, jest, and relax his grip. In the heyday of his power he insisted on giving the *mot d'ordre* to the universe. Britons and Spaniards, Russians and Germans, authors, newspaper editors and printers, Pope and cardinals, had to fall in line. Finally, the world grew weary of this regimentation, as the world will always weary of those who take it too seriously. There is truth in Victor Hugo's verdict—"Il gênait Dieu."

LECTURE VI

THE THINKER

"Sa Majesté ne croit que ce qui est."—GOURGAUD, *Journal*, i, p. 228.

IN venturing to discuss this difficult topic, I may remind you of the suggestive remark of Aristotle at the beginning of the "Ethics," that the statement of a subject is adequate if it is made clear so far as the subject matter permits.¹ Some such reservation is especially needed when we seek to probe the thoughts of a man of affairs. In such a case we must not expect the clearness of outline which is possible in delineating the thoughts of one who deals with the exact sciences. Inquirers in those fields of knowledge are free from the predilections or prejudices that cloud the ideas of a man of affairs, for whom life is action and speculative thought a by-product.

It is also far from easy to dissociate Napoleon from the events of which he was so large a part. His imagination often soared aloft, but in his best days, say down to 1806, he kept it under the control of reason. His bent was towards the practical; and it has been well said of him that he thought facts, not words. Phrases and

¹ Aristotle, "Nicom. Ethics," i, ch. iii, § 1.

catch-words, which had been the meat and drink of France during the Revolution, were nought to him; and by this determined objectivity, this resolve to see things as they were, he speedily dominated her; for he came to the front at a time when her sons were wearying of revolutionary notions. At midsummer 1795 Gouverneur Morris describes them as so tired of the ceaseless confusion that monarchy in some form was certain to ensue.¹ Thus, popular feeling trended strongly in the line of Bonaparte's mental development; and the coincidence explains the course of subsequent events.

After the spring of youth was past, he barred out sentiment from his thoughts. His style of speech and of writing is clear, precise, vigorous, but nearly always curt and formless. His statements follow one another in wonderful profusion. His letters rain facts; and the letters bespeak the man. He never allowed fine speeches in the Council of State. What he wanted was practical statements. In January 1810 he thus censured a report of Champagny, his Minister of Foreign Affairs: "The style is not sufficiently business-like. What I want is hard reasoning, not picturesqueness."² A fit motto for the guidance of his officials would have been—"No flowers—by command." Enamoured of clearness and precision, he always expected concise and definite answers from his aides-de-camp; and woe betide any one who could not give them. In such a case it was best to manufacture facts,

¹ "Dropmore Papers," iii, 88.

² Lecestre, "Lettres inédites de Nap.," ii, 4.

and trust to luck to conceal the imposture. This impatience of anything like vagueness is often obvious in Napoleon's words and actions. To take an instance from his letters. On 27th March 1808 he suddenly offered the crown of Spain to his brother Louis, King of Holland. After setting forth the advantages, he said: "Reply to me categorically. If I name you King of Spain, do you agree? Can I count on you? Answer solely in these two phrases—'I have received your letter of such a day. I reply yes . . . or no.'"¹ So, too, during the Waterloo campaign, on the occasion of the desertion of General Bourmont, Marshal Ney, who had guaranteed the fidelity of that officer, ventured to state that he had indeed thought Bourmont most devoted to Napoleon. The Emperor cut him short with the words: "Allez, M. le Maréchal: ceux qui sont bleus sont bleus: ceux qui sont blancs sont blancs."²

No less precise was his view of men and women. In an age which had eagerly sought to level up the race at large and to engrave the Rights of Man on every heart, he suddenly appeared, regarding men, not as representatives of a perfectible Humanity, but as creatures possessed of certain aptitudes, customs, prejudices, vices. Coming to the front at a time when the heedless and convulsive forward moves of the human brain had led to a fall of the inert trunk he saw the mistake, soothed the brain, set the body

¹ "Nap. Corresp.," xvi, 501.

² Gourgaud, "Campagne de 1815," p. 37. See, too, "Rev. des deux Mondes," 15th May 1912, for similar expressions.

upright, and made it walk at a reasonable pace. He believed the French people and the human race to be incapable of progressing alone by their own powers; and he always postulated control by the ablest man of the age. Napoleon III, who had closely studied the career of his uncle, raised this postulate to the level of a universal truth when he wrote: "The nature of democracy is to personify itself in a man."¹

From Napoleon, then, we must expect no inspiring thoughts as to the future of the human race. His main achievement was to clip the wings of idealism and to give effect to the utilitarian impulse set in motion by Bentham. In regard to the internal policy of France the Emperor may be termed a crowned Benthamite. In his legislation he strikes the happy mean between old French customs and new French impulses. His policy in its better days embodies the spirit of compromise and gives it fixed and abiding expression. His thoughts on men and politics therefore take a middle flight, strong and unwavering, near the earth, and rarely soaring aloft. But they possess, what is rare among the champions of compromise, unfailing vigour. Too often the spirit of compromise embodies itself in flabby creatures like Mr. Brooke in "Middlemarch," who always found that much was to be said for both sides. In Napoleon the genius of compromise shone forth radiant, forceful, triumphant. As a political thinker he is the lineal descendant of Henri IV, and Mirabeau. Take these words, uttered in August

¹ L. Napoleon, "Les Idées Napoléoniennes," p. 27.

1800, as a clear statement of reasonable opportunism: "My policy consists in governing men as the greatest number wish to be governed. That, I think, is the way of recognizing the sovereignty of the people. By becoming a Catholic I have ended the Vendéan War; by becoming a Moslem I gained a footing in Egypt; by becoming Ultramontane I won over public opinion in Italy. If I governed Jews, I would rebuild the temple of Solomon. So, too, I will talk of liberty in the free part of San Domingo; I will retain slavery in the Isle of France (Mauritius), even in the unfree part of San Domingo, always with the intention of limiting and softening slavery where I retain it, and of restoring order and introducing discipline where I maintain liberty."¹

The passage is remarkable on several counts. Bonaparte saw as clearly as Bentham the motives that would determine a rational policy in the nineteenth century. In place of royalism that relied on the privileged classes, in place of Jacobinism upheld by fanatics, he proposed to establish a government grounded on the needs of the masses. Equally noteworthy is the frankness of the statement. Bonaparte does not hide the egotism which underlies his policy; he is strong enough, and frank enough, to confess it with almost cynical candour. He knows that only he can guide the masses wisely or control them firmly, and he does not fear to say so.

As an example of keen insight into a political

¹ Roederer, "Journal," p. 16.

problem and of an illuminating solution, take the following utterance to the leaders of the Swiss Confederation in September 1802:

Switzerland differs from all other countries in the series of catastrophes which have befallen her of late years, in her geographical position, her different languages, her different religions, and the extreme divergence of customs in her different Cantons. Nature herself has made your country a Federation, and no wise man would wish to change it. Circumstances and the spirit of past ages divided you into sovereign and subject peoples; more recent circumstances and the spirit of the present age, more in accord with justice and reason, have established legal equality throughout your land. Many of your Cantons have for centuries been absolutely democratic. In others, certain families have obtained an ascendancy, and divided the inhabitants into rulers and subjects. The influence and spirit of surrounding countries, Italy, Savoy, France, and Alsace, have essentially contributed to this state of things in these last-named portions of your land. The renunciation of all privileges is at once the desire and the interest of your people. . . .

In your country nothing can be uniform; neither your finances, nor your army, nor your administration. You have never supported a regular, paid army; you cannot afford a financial system on a large scale: you have never had permanent diplomatic agents at foreign Courts. Situated on the height of the mountain ranges which separate France, Germany, and Italy, you share some of the spirit of each of these nations. The neutrality of your country, the prosperity of your commerce, and a homely system of administration are your only requisites. Such is the language which I have consistently held to your countrymen when they have consulted me on their affairs. It seems to me so reasonable,

that I hope it will require no extraordinary effort to convince you of the good sense of my words.¹

Yet this practical sense was winged by imagination. An illustration occurs in his treatment of the science of history. To it, as we saw in Lecture II, he assigned a very high place in education; but he was dissatisfied with the manner in which it was written. Probably he disliked the ambling style of the literary historians, whose exasperating vagueness induced Dr. Johnson to class history as an inferior branch of literature. The Emperor, ever keenly alive to unreality, wanted to know facts and the sources whence they were obtained. At St. Helena he declared his aims to have been the revision of the annals of France from the best authorities, especially those of the Foreign Office, and the publication of the best manuscripts in the Imperial Library, as a means of laying a solid ground-work for the historical writings of the future. So far as I know, this was one of the first proposals of the kind; and it places him among the pioneers of historical science. But this was not all. He saw that the historian must have imagination. These are his words: "It is accepted that a historian is a judge, who is to be the organ of posterity; and so many qualities, so many perfections, are expected of him that it is difficult to believe that a good history can be written to order. What can be obtained to order from men of well-balanced mind and a certain measure of talent

¹ Thibaudeau, "Bonaparte and the Consulate," pp. 277-278 (Eng. edit.).

are historical monographs, the results of laborious research, containing authentic documents along with critical observations tending to throw light on events. If these researches, documents, and materials are framed in a good narrative, a piece of work of this sort will bear a considerable resemblance to history; and yet its author would not be a historian in the sense that we attach to the word."¹ Napoleon, then, was fully alive to the limitations of mere editors of historical documents. He saw the need of documentary groundwork, but also of the gift of imagination which alone can endow the narrative with life.

A man who sees quickly into the heart of a problem is often endowed with the power of trenchant statement. Napoleon rarely made long speeches, unless we include his longer conversations in the Council of State, which were too familiar and discursive to be termed speeches;² but when he sought to sum up a question he did so with terseness and power. We all know the incident, reported in the Bourrienne Memoirs, of Napoleon's conversation on religion with the *savants* on board *l'Orient* when bound for Egypt; how, after exhausting their armoury of atheistical arguments, he pointed to the starry sky and said: "Very ingenious, Messieurs; but who made all that?" Coming from Bourrienne alone, the story would be suspect; but Roederer gives it again, though in a

¹ "Nap. Corresp.," xv, 97.

² The Duc de Brogne ("Mems.," i, 62) terms them incoherent trivial, and full of repetitions, utterly different in style from the St. Helena *dictées*, the authenticity of which he calls in question

different setting. Equally incisive was Napoleon's interposition during a discussion of Roederer as to the need of the First Consul having an heir, whether a son of his own or by adoption. Napoleon cut him short by the words: "My natural heir is the French people. It is my child. I have worked only for it."¹ A man who on the spur of the moment utters so noble and inspiring a thought is born to rule, especially in a land which is governed by phrases. Contrast Napoleon with Louis XVI, who never by any chance stumbled on a happy phrase; with Robespierre, tedious in speech and timorous in action; with Sieyès, clever only in print; and you will see why he became supreme over the uncultured soldiers and inefficient talkers who appealed to separate parts of the brain of France. He dominated the whole of it.

The most interesting mental problem of Napoleon's career is his attitude towards destiny. If we may judge by his frequent appeals to fate or to his star, he was a fatalist; and his habit of crossing himself on hearing exciting news seems to strengthen the supposition. But we must beware of superficial judgements in the case of so complex a nature and so intricate a problem. The habit just referred to may have been no more than a recurrence to the ways of childhood; and there is little or nothing in his acts and words that implies an absolute trust in destiny. Indeed, it is questionable whether any man, except perhaps a few fakirs, has ever allowed himself to drift solely

according to the decrees of fate; and even fakirs take care to perform their austerities where they will be seen and will get bread.

Now, much as Napoleon indulged in talk about his star, he refuted it by avowals made in times of self-revelation; witness these striking words to General Gourgaud at St. Helena: "Bah! Man is always free: always master of himself."¹ Again, consider this fact, that during the days of his power he frequently declared that he did everything from calculation. Thus, on 6th June 1806 he wrote to Joseph Bonaparte: "In war one gains nothing except by calculation. Only that which is profoundly thought out in all its details produces any result."² And in November 1813 he thus analysed the motives of his conduct. "I leave one place, I go to another, I leave St. Cloud, I go to Moscow, not for my inclination, or for my friends, but by mere dry calculation."³ But he who relies solely on reason and calculation cannot be a thorough fatalist, at least not in the eastern sense; for he believes in the sufficiency of his own mind, not in the supremacy of some controlling power outside him. Further, if he acts in full confidence in the correctness of his reasoning, his belief is not a mere philosophical tenet, it is his inmost conviction, the guiding principle of his life.

¹ Gourgaud, ii, 128. See, too, Napoleon's long argument against fatalism in Las Cases ("Mémorial," vi, 302-304) which seems to me decisive as to his disbelief.

² "Nap. Corresp.," xii, 442.

³ Roederer, "Journal," p. 323.

That, as it seems to me, was the case with Napoleon. From the time of his first military achievement at Toulon in 1793 confidence in himself is the chief trait of his character. Nothing daunts him, not even adversity such as befalls him a few months later. You will remember the remarkable words written to Joséphine in April 1796, quoted in Lecture I. "Sometimes, when casting my eyes on the ills which men might do me, on the fate which destiny might have in store for me, I have gazed stedfastly on the most incredible misfortunes without a wrinkle on my brow, or a vestige of surprise." He wrote those words shortly before his first battle, at Montenotte. By degrees he discovered his strength; and at St. Helena he confessed that the success at Lodi strengthened his confidence and his ambition. True, a month after Lodi we find him in a moment of despondency writing: "Poor human beings that we are, we can only observe Nature, not conquer her."¹ But no such sentence occurs in the later letters of the man who defied Nature in Egypt, Spain, and Russia. In truth, the Italian campaign made him master of himself and therefore "master of destiny."

Thenceforth he resolves to shape circumstances, not to be shaped by them. He believes that boldness, energy, prestige, determine events. During the long negotiations for peace with Austria in 1797 he writes from Milan to Masséna at the front: "You must not give way to the Austrians in anything. Be the strongest at all points, so that if there is the least quarrel or scuffle,

¹ "Nap. Corresp.," i, 378.

they shall be beaten. Were it only a matter of fist-cuffs, the Austrian soldier must always get the worst of it."¹ This phrase explains much. It is the early version of that later dictum—"Providence is on the side of the big battalions."

In the East, naturally enough, he talked much about destiny. But his world-compelling, nature-defying energy has nothing in common with the fatalism of the oriental, who smokes and meditates on nothing in particular. The hero who looked on the British victory at the Nile as merely a temporary check, compelling the French to do greater things than they had intended, was no fatalist. He might rail at Fortune, as he did at Boulogne in August 1805, when waiting for Villeneuve to appear; but he reserved his most exuberant epithets for the admiral. If he had really believed that Fortune was the sole arbitress of events, would he not have exhausted his rage against her, and left Villeneuve alone? In truth, no great commander is absolutely a fatalist. If he were, his army would fall to pieces. The effort of Tolstoi to prove that the Russian campaign of 1812 was throughout determined by destiny, in whose hands the commanders were mere puppets, is highly interesting as a *tour de force*, and as a revelation of that great thinker's philosophy; but it can deceive no one who has thoroughly studied Napoleon's character and career. The disaster to the Grand Army was due in the last resort to the Emperor's resolve to hold on to Moscow and intimidate the Czar Alexander at all costs, even at

¹ "Nap. Corresp.," iii, 146.

the risk of a winter campaign or of what he termed a strategic movement to winter quarters near Smolensk.¹ In a very limited sense, that awful episode is a drama of destiny. But the determining force is the determination of the chief actor, who acted then as always from "mere dry calculation." He had braved similar risks in Egypt, and in 1805 he longed to brave them on the Boulogne flotilla. In those two cases Nelson and Villeneuve foiled his efforts. At Moscow he had his way, until winter was close upon him and claimed her due.

In speaking so much about destiny and fortune, what was Napoleon's aim? He did everything from reasoning. What was the reasoning in this case? Perhaps here, as at so many points, his early studies will give us a clue. I think it highly probable that he was influenced by the Greek notions of fortune and destiny. He had read with deep interest Plutarch's "Lives"; and many events there recorded showed the influence of the idea of fortune upon the Greeks and Romans. The career of Timoleon, as described by Plutarch, is perhaps the most remarkable instance of unchequered success ever recorded. Though unskilled in strategy, he undertook to lead a small Corinthian force for the liberation of Sicily from the tyrant Dionysius and the Carthaginians. In respect to material force the enterprise seemed desperate; but the omens were highly favourable. During the ceremonies at Corinth which preceded his departure, a crown of victory, detached from some

¹ "Nap. Corresp.," xxiv, 265.

decorations, fell down upon his head; and a light as from heaven guided his ships towards Rhegium. By skill and address he slipped across the strait, evading the Carthaginian galleys. Victory crowned his daring rush against their troops, whom he took unawares. The Greek cities, startled by these signs of divine favour, espoused his cause; and he succeeded in capturing the citadel of Syracuse and Dionysius himself. A plot to murder Timoleon was foiled by an avenger of blood striking down the very man who was about to take the hero's life. All these events (says Plutarch) "made the people reverence and protect Timoleon as a sacred person sent by heaven to revenge and redeem Sicily." He himself before the crowning battle against the Carthaginians gave a happy turn to what seemed an evil omen with a skill like that displayed by William the Conqueror at the landing in Pevensey Bay. Finally, after giving liberty and just government to Sicily, Timoleon thanked the gods for the favour which they had vouchsafed, and erected a shrine in his house to Good Fortune, ascribing all his successes to her. Clearly these uninterrupted triumphs were in large measure the outcome of the belief in the special favour accorded to him by the gods.

Now, this story was well known to Napoleon. Further, he, a child of the Mediterranean, brought up among a primitive people, half hunters, half fishermen, realized the force of superstition. Perhaps at one time he was imbued by it; for, as we have seen, he retained the custom of crossing himself on the receipt of good news. He early rejected revealed re-

ligion, but he retained his belief in good luck, much as Frederick the Great did.¹ He knew that soldiers, peasants, and many of a higher station as well, worshipped good fortune, the shadow of all primitive cults. It is therefore highly probable that his appeals to his star, or fortune, or destiny, were designed to enlist on his side the crude but potent conceptions which have always counted for so much among the Mediterranean peoples, nerving the Greeks to do more than their best for Alexander the Great, Epaminondas, and Timoleon. Some generals are lucky, others unlucky. Napoleon determined to be among the lucky ones, and set himself to conquer Fortune by claiming that she was already on his side. The device completely succeeded, so completely indeed that this cool calculator, this embodiment of hard dry reason, has been called the Man of Destiny, as though he sat up at night viewing the stars and casting horoscopes. He never did anything so foolish. If he sat up very late it was in order to transact business, or to procure the latest possible reports from his officers before ordering the movements for the morrow.²

I can find no well-authenticated incident of his career which convicts him of downright superstition. The most plausible story to that effect is one recorded by Chaptal. It refers to the summons issued by Napoleon for the meeting of the Jews in a Sanhedrin at Paris. While Napoleon, Chaptal, and others were

¹ "Malmesbury Diaries," i, 124.

² Yorck von Wartenburg, "Napoleon as General," i, 283 (Eng. edit.).

at dinner, the Emperor's uncle, Cardinal Fesch, entered in consternation, and, in reply to Napoleon's inquiries, made answer: "Do you want the end of the world to come?" "Why?" retorted the Emperor. "Do you not know that the Bible foretells the end of the world when the Jews are recognized as constituting a nation?" Chaptal and the guests were inclined to laugh; but the Emperor became serious, and went out with Fesch to an ante-room, where he remained conversing for an hour. Next day the Sanhedrin was dissolved.¹

Now, assuming the story to be true (and Chaptal is a French memoir-writer), it does not necessarily imply that Napoleon believed the end of the world to depend on the assembly of the Jews in a Sanhedrin. It may mean no more than this: that he, as being responsible for public opinion and public credit, foresaw grave inconvenience if the Royalist *frondeurs* of the Boulevard St. Germain or the "bears" on the Bourse spread the rumour that the end of all things was at hand. For one thing, it would stop the payment of taxes and might cause a headlong fall in stocks. We do not know the workings of the Emperor's mind on this question; but I suspect that Fesch's silly story caused him very little concern about the end of the world and very much concern about a general repudiation of debt.²

¹ Chaptal "Souvenirs," p. 243.

² At St. Helena he once remarked to Gourgaud that he believed the terrible fire at the Schwarzenberg ball in Paris, in which several persons perished, was of sinister augury for him.

The cleverest man about Napoleon was Talleyrand; and I think that he detected the unreality of the references to the star. The great diplomatist let fall a suggestive remark to Hyde de Neuville before his interview with Bonaparte in 1799. Speaking of the First Consul, Talleyrand said: "If he lasts one year, he will go far. He is a man who believes that he is the master of Fortune, a man whose astonishing confidence in his star inspires in his partisans an equally astonishing sense of security."¹ "Master of Fortune!" The two words are in direct contradiction. Destiny is no longer destiny if you are master of it. Fortune, if you control her, ceases to be a goddess dispensing her favours from on high; she becomes a Brocken-spectre, the projection of your own figure upon fog.

For the most part Napoleon thought so clearly and incisively that it is hard to think of him as a blind devotee of Fortune, or as deceived by the vague and silly talk about her. On one occasion he shore it asunder by asserting that in the long run men meet with their deserts, a statement which implies that character determines events. As the Emperor often

and he was therefore well pleased when at the Battle of Dresden Schwarzenberg was killed; for he said to himself, "Then the fatality was for him, not for me." Now, the curious thing is that Schwarzenberg did not perish at Dresden but lived on to invade France in 1814. It was Moreau who was killed. Gourgaud relates the story and adds the needed correction, but without commenting on the strange lapse of memory which prompted this artificial outburst of fatalism. (Gourgaud, "Journal," i, 519.)

¹ Hyde de Neuville, "Méms.," i, 273.

spoke about controlling Fortune,¹ it is clear that he saw through the fable which imposed on the multitude. Why, then, did he use the language of the multitude? Obviously, in order to impress it the more. The belief that he was the favourite of Fortune was an asset of priceless worth. In the field it was worth an army. Wellington estimated the presence of Napoleon on a battlefield as equalling a force of 40,000 men, because "he suited a French army so exactly."² One might add that the troops redoubled their energy, because they saw the star of victory going before them when the Emperor was at hand.³

Turning to the domain of literature, we note that Napoleon's favourite poem was "Ossian," which he read in the Italian translation of Cesarotti. At that time Macpherson's poem had a considerable vogue, which was perhaps due to the dispute whether it was

¹ See instances *ante*, pp. 21, 57.

² Stanhope, "Conversations with Wellington," p. 9.

³ The appeals to the star were not to be effective for ever. General Mathieu Dumas mentioned to de Broglie a curious incident which happened on a parade ground at Dresden during the armistice of June—July 1813. Some French conscripts were being severely rated by drill sergeants for their clumsiness, when the Emperor came on the scene. In his annoyance at the severity of a drill sergeant, he took a musket and sought to drill the poor boys, but with no better result. At last, turning to Dumas, who was looking on with dejected mien, he said: "You do not believe in miracles?" "Yes I do," replied Dumas, "provided that I have time to make the sign of the cross." Whereupon Napoleon at once broke off the conversation and returned to his headquarters. De Broglie, "Méms.," i, 218 (Eng. edit.).

a Celtic legend or the poet's invention. Napoleon took some interest in that question; and his nature thrilled at the adventures and exploits of the Irish hero, which lost none of their force and grandiosity in the Italian translation. He often mentioned to Englishmen his admiration of "Ossian." At Fontainebleau in 1814 he declared that there was something very warlike about that poetry. On H.M.S. "Northumberland," when bound for St. Helena, he showed Glover, the secretary, a copy of the poem and asked him whether he had ever read it, remarking that it was very fine in French. To Lady Malcolm at St. Helena he said that the Italian version was far better.¹ We now deem those poems mere bombast; but an inflated style is not inappropriate to the subject, and it certainly pleased Napoleon. This reveals his predilection in literature. He appreciated rhetorical poetry; and elevated sentiments, whether in verse or prose, appealed to him. But he lacked the inmost poetic sense. M. Guillois, a diligent and sympathetic student of his writings, says he has discovered in them only one sentence that can be called poetical. It runs thus: "The spring is at last appearing, and the leaves are beginning to sprout."² I think this verdict one-sided and unfair. The passage in which he described to Las Cases his early love for Mlle. Colombier at Valence, when they met at dawn and

¹ Sir N. Campbell, "Journal," p. 158. Lady Malcolm, "A Diary of St. Helena," p. 21.

² "Nap. Corresp.," xx, 221; quoted by A. Guillois, "Napoléon" (1889).

ate cherries together in her mother's orchard, is a sweet little idyll. Then, too, his early letters to Joséphine also rise to heights of passion which dwarf mere questions of literary form. When deeply moved, he gave forth to the world letters, speeches, proclamations vibrating with feeling, instinct with a fiery eloquence. There is at times a poetry in prose which surpasses that of verse; and Napoleon sometimes rose to the heights in which both poetry and prose find their source.

An intense nature cannot be intense at all points; and Napoleon had his blind sides, namely, in regard to music and the arts. His liking for music was limited to simple little songs, such as those of Rousseau, which in youth he so much praised. As regards painting and sculpture, Chaptal declared that Napoleon's sole test of merit was accuracy. On his visit to David's studio to inspect the great painting of the Coronation, he viewed it closely, but solely in regard to the fidelity of the portraits. Further, he showed little interest in the works of the great masters at the Louvre; and when he stopped in front of one of them it was merely in order to ask, "Whose is that?" Similarly, at Dresden in July 1807 he hurried through the galleries at a pace obviously painful to the King of Saxony, who could scarcely keep up with his pre-occupied visitor.¹ In architecture it was the gigantic which most appealed to Napoleon. He said more than once that the things which astonished him most were the Pyramids and the stature of a giant named

¹ Chaptal, 269-272; "Lettres de Mme. Reinhard," p. 340.

Fréon. To this peculiarity of the Emperor we may ascribe the grandiosity of his chief monuments in Paris—the Arc de Triomphe and the Vendôme column—obviously inspired by the Arch of Constantine and Trajan's column at Rome.

He who spends his time mainly in affairs of government will fascinate a thinker, who views the world mainly from the study. In fact, in many ways the man of the study will gladly hail the man of action as his superior. Certainly Goethe deemed it one of the events of his life to converse with Napoleon, and in 1831 passed judgement on him to Eckermann as a born ruler of the world, one of those who find happiness only in command, one who, always himself, a match for every situation, rested steadfast and secure on his clear fixed will. It was natural that the great poet should admire one who had helped to call a new world into being. The author of "Faust" (Part I), who had looked on, half in weariness, half in irony, at the limitations that beset a German *savant*, must have gazed with rapture at the transformation which came over Western and Southern Germany at the behests of her conqueror and organizer. The spread of equal laws, religious toleration, and an enlightened polity to States formerly penned up by jealous rulers and graded in the old feudal strata, was an event of high significance; and it is scarcely too much to compare the dreary negations and futile subtleties of the old life of Faust with the twilight of the pre-Revolutionary times, and the many-sided activities of his second life

with the larger day then dawning upon the Teutonic realm of the new Charlemagne.

There are two accounts of the Emperor's interviews with Goethe. One is by Talleyrand,¹ the other by the poet himself. They differ hopelessly in nearly every particular, so that destructive critics could well maintain that Napoleon and Goethe never met. But they did meet; and the discrepancies of the two narratives are easily accounted for. Talleyrand described the more personal and political details; while Goethe recorded what interested him. Especially noteworthy in the poet's account is Napoleon's criticism of Voltaire's "Mahomet," which Goethe had translated. Napoleon censured it for giving an unworthy portrait of the conqueror of the then known world. He also expressed his disapproval of all dramas in which fate played a part, summing up his censure in these self-revealing words: "What do they mean by their fatalism? Politics is fatalism."²

Napoleon's admiration for conciseness of thought and style was so marked that it is difficult to account for his approval of Goethe's "Sorrows of Werther," which, it appears, he had read seven times. He

¹ Talleyrand, "Méms.," i, 432.

² Strange to say "Mahomet" was played at Erfurt a few days later, doubtless because of the many references which were applicable to Napoleon's own career, especially the lines (act i, sc. 4):

"Au nom de conquérant et de triomphateur
Il veut joindre le nom de pacificateur."

At this couplet Napoleon displayed visible signs of emotion, and a sympathetic thrill went round the theatre.

pointed out an artistic blemish in the work, namely, that Werther's suicidal mania proceeded not solely from disappointed love but also from frustrated ambition. Always enamoured of clearness and precision, he found the mixture of motives untrue to nature, and Goethe agreed with him. The criticism of the Emperor and the acquiescence of the author are equally curious; for, as Lewes has pointed out, the original of Werther (*i.e.* Jerusalem) committed suicide owing to the double cause—a fact which Goethe must have forgotten when he agreed with Napoleon, not to mention the fact that, when revising the work, he had simplified the cause of suicide in deference to a somewhat similar criticism from Herder. It is a signal triumph for Lewes that on this topic he could set right Napoleon, Herder and Goethe, by a triumphant appeal to fact.

During a conversation with Goethe at Weimar a few days later the Emperor referred to Shakespeare in the depreciatory terms that might be expected from the admirer of Voltaire and "Ossian." In this connection, too, he expressed his surprise that Goethe, with his great intellect, did not like *les genres tranchés*. To this Goethe made no reply. Thereupon the Emperor discoursed suggestively on tragedy, and finally urged Goethe to write a "Death of Caesar," but in a grander style than that of Voltaire, so as to show what vast schemes Caesar would have carried out had his life been spared. Next came the suggestion that the poet should leave Weimar and reside at Paris. The invitation threw an illuminating light on the

former; but the advancing years of the poet furnished a sufficient reason for not proceeding to the French capital, where assuredly he would have sunk to the level of an imperial Poet Laureate.

During a ball held at Weimar Napoleon had an animated discussion on Tacitus with the famous *littérateur*, Wieland, leading up to it by the statement that tragedy is a school for enlightened men, and in some respects is superior to history. By this time a group of thinking men had assembled in the corner of the *salon*, and the Emperor proceeded as follows:

I assure you that the historian whom you are always quoting, Tacitus, has never taught me anything. Do you know any greater, yet often more unjust, detractor of mankind? To the simplest actions he assigns criminal motives. He represents all the (Roman) Emperors as profound villains, in order to win admiration for the genius which has unmasked them. His "Annals" may justly be called an abstract of the imperial records rather than a history of the Empire. They tell of nothing but accusations, accused persons and people opening their veins in the bath. He, who is ever speaking of informers, is himself the greatest of them. And what a style! What unrelieved obscurity! I am not a great Latinist; but the obscurity of Tacitus is apparent in ten or a dozen French or Italian translations that I have read. Hence I conclude it is innate in him, a result of his genius, as it is termed, as much as of his style, a trait inseparable from his mode of expression only because it resides in his mode of thinking. I have heard him praised for the fear that he inspires in tyrants. He makes them fear the people; and that is a misfortune for the people themselves.

Half apologetically Napoleon here broke off his

remarks and called attention to the excellence of the Czar's dancing. The company was much more interested in the intellectual duel which was evidently at hand. Encouraged by Napoleon's frankness, Wieland deferentially took up the challenge and began by pointing out that Tacitus denounced the Roman Emperors, not to their degraded subjects alone, but to mankind in all generations. Finally he expressed a hope that men would probably be governed by reason instead of by passion as heretofore. To this the Emperor made answer: "That is what all our philosophers say. But though I look for this strength of reason, I nowhere see it." Wieland then boldly observed that a sign of its growth was the increased attention given to Tacitus, the greatest colourist of antiquity, as Racine called him. The Roman Empire was at that time ruled by monsters, whom Tacitus chastised. Of necessity he had to confine himself to the records of Rome, while Livy ranged at large with her armies.¹ In Tacitus one sees the unhappy age in which princes and peoples stood opposed, each trembling in fear of the other. But when he comes to describe the reigns in which the Empire and Liberty were reconciled, clearly he regards that as the greatest of man's discoveries.

Here there was a general buzz of applause. Napoleon thereupon graciously remarked that the odds were against him; but he deftly turned his enemy's flank by the inquiry whether Wieland had not been in corre-

¹ Tacitus himself bewailed the narrow range of his themes ("Annals," bk. iv, ch. xxxii).

spondence with Johann von Müller, the historian at Berlin, who doubtless warned him of Napoleon's hostility to Tacitus. To his own confusion and to the amusement of the company, Wieland confessed that this was so. Having thus regained the advantage, Napoleon ended the discussion, affirming that Tacitus did not reveal the inner causes of events, and left unexplained their mysterious connections. In fine Governments ought to be judged only according to their environment.¹ Thus the great man drew off, dividing the honours of the debate with his courageous antagonist. As usual, he respected and admired a man who knew his own mind, and spoke it forth clearly and strongly. To the end of his days he retained his dislike of Tacitus. At St. Helena he reaffirmed his thesis, first maintained before the Institute, that Tacitus, though a fine colourist, did not explain the motives influencing men's actions. His stories against Tiberius were absurd. And why should Nero burn Rome, when he loved her so much?² No reason was given for that act. The exile then laughed at the notion that he disliked Tacitus for his opposition to tyranny.³

¹ Talleyrand, "Méms.," i, 442-446.

² See, too, Gourgaud, "Journal," i, 165; ii, 341. It is worth noting that Tacitus leaves the question open whether the fire was due to Nero or to chance. The story of Nero harping is not in Tacitus, but in the far less reputable writer, Suetonius.

³ I cannot but think that this motive weighed with Napoleon. He must have disliked the early chapters of the "Annals," describing the abrogation of the old Republican safeguards and customs. See, too, the protest of Tacitus ("Annals," bk. iv,

At this point I gladly acknowledge the debt of gratitude of all historical students to Napoleon for first raising doubt as to the life-likeness of the portrait of Tiberius painted by Tacitus. Scholars now generally admit that the gloom and horror of that picture are overcharged; and it is a signal proof of the acumen of Napoleon that he was among the first to detect the exaggeration.

The Emperor's religious beliefs form an entrancing though difficult subject of inquiry. In the days of his power, as behoved the author of the Concordat, he was extremely reticent on this topic. Thus, Chaptal, who knew him well, believed that he detected in him the beginnings of unbelief; and others deemed him a good Catholic because he occasionally went to mass, and, while there, behaved with more decorum than Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette displayed in their days of prosperity. This conduct is certainly to his credit, and gained him the reputation of devoutness. I confess I can find in his early writings, his letters, and his more intimate confessions, few if any signs of genuine religious feeling, still less of conviction. To refer to his early works.—The reply to the Genevese pastor who had reproached Rousseau for his attacks on religion is a warm, almost fierce, defence of the philosopher. Bonaparte took it for granted that Catholicism is antagonistic to the ideal polity of the future; and he had not a good word to say on behalf

ch. xxxv) against the folly of seeking to stifle truth by the arbitrary proscription of a history.

of Protestantism, because it impaired the unity of the general will. He at that time deemed religion an anti-social force, diverting men from the pursuit of liberty in this world by holding out the prospect of compensation in the life to come. At a later period he valued religion for the very reason for which he declaimed against it in his Jacobinical days.

During his campaign in Italy, Bonaparte for a time desired to overthrow the temporal power of the Papacy¹; but he finally came to respect religion as an immense power in the world; and, as we saw in Lecture III, in reviewing the policy of the Concordat, he regarded it as of the utmost importance to utilize that force on behalf of morality and order. He continued to lay great stress upon the value of religion as a political sedative. Not long after Austerlitz he sent to Paris a stern reprimand to a learned man, Lalande by name, who had spoken against religion at the Institute of France. The Emperor declared that he must be in his second childhood to utter opinions so absurd and dangerous; or else he was actuated by vanity and the wish to be talked about; for atheism was "a principle destructive of all social organization, as it takes from man all his consolations and hopes."² Then again at Erfurt in 1808 he thus bade farewell to the literary men assembled to do him honour. "Sirs," he said, "philosophers torment themselves by creating systems. In vain will they find a better than that of Christianity which, by reconciling man to himself, assures both

¹ "Nap. Corresp.," iii, No. 1828 (26th May 1797).

² *Ibid.*, xi, 472.

public order and the quiet of States. Your idéologues destroy the age of illusions; and for peoples, as for individuals, the age of illusions is that of happiness.”¹

Deferring to the next lecture the topic of Napoleon's unworthy treatment of the Pope in the years 1807-14, I ask your attention to a few of his statements at St. Helena. By that time the cloak of policy and reserve had fallen away from him, and we detect his real sentiments on religion. To General Gourgaud he often unburdened himself with singular frankness. Possibly at times he exaggerated his assertions, either from native impetuosity or from a desire to tease the young man, for instance, by the proposal to write a history of the campaigns of Moses. Gourgaud seems to have been a good Catholic, upholding the cause of religion against the almost sceptical Bertrand, Las Cases, and Montholon. To him, then, on more than one occasion Napoleon declared that man was solely of the earth; he was earthy matter, warmed by the sun and combined with electric fluids. An ox, of course, was nothing more than that; and man was only a superior kind of ox, consisting of better organized materials. Possibly in the future there would be on this earth beings superior to us. “Where [adds Napoleon] is the soul of an infant or of a lunatic? The soul follows the body. It grows in the child and decays in the old man. . . . Nevertheless [he concludes] the idea of a God is the simplest. Who has made all that?”²

¹ Talleyrand, “Méms.,” i, 452.

² Gourgaud, “Journal,” i, 297, 440; ii, 311, 409.

On several occasions he declared that the morality of the Christian religion was merely that of Socrates and Plato. Sometimes he expressed doubts whether Jesus Christ ever existed; and he declared emphatically his preference of Mohammedanism to Christianity for the Eastern peoples. In Egypt the sheikhs had embarrassed him much by asking him about the Trinity, and insisting that we worshipped three Gods and therefore were pagans. Besides, he continued, Mohammed conquered half the known world in ten years, a task which Christianity accomplished in three centuries. Or, again, he declared his admiration for Mohammed in declaring a holy war.¹ Clearly this preference was founded largely on military motives. He seems to have considered that Christianity made men afraid of death; and he once said to Gourgaud that if he had believed in a God who dealt out retribution, he would have been afraid in war.² Mohammedanism, on the contrary, was a fine fighting creed.

At bottom, then, Napoleon viewed religion as a political force, capable of rousing men to fiercely aggressive activity, or of consolidating order after a time of chaos, and at all times serving to console the poor for the hardships of their lot. It mattered not whether they understood religious services. On one occasion he declared that Roman Catholicism was better than Anglicanism, because in the former the people did not understand what was sung at Vespers

¹ Gourgaud, "Journal," i, 454; ii, 78, 152, 272.

² *Ibid.*, ii, 409.

and only looked on. It was better not to throw light upon those things.¹

What, then, are we to say of the beautiful monologue, first published in the year 1840, in which Napoleon is made to contrast the evanescence of his Empire with that of Christ? After long and learned arguments against paganism and the systems of Lycurgus and Confucius, the Emperor is reported as saying: "It is not the same with Christ. Everything in him astonishes me; his spirit soars above mine, and his will confounds me. Between him and every other person in the world no comparison is possible. He is truly a being apart from all. His ideas and his sentiments, the truth that he announces, his manner of convincing one, are not to be explained either by human organization or by the nature of things. His birth and the history of his life, the profundity of his dogma, which touches the height of all difficulties and yet is their most admirable solution, his Gospel, the singularity of this mysterious being, his apparition, his Empire, his march across centuries and realms—all is to me a prodigy, an unfathomable mystery that plunges me in a reverie from which I cannot escape, a mystery

¹ Gourgaud, "Journal," i, 441. It is doubtful whether even in youth he was devout. Madame Mère at the time of the conclusion of the Concordat mentioned to Roederer a curious little incident. Shortly before the first great religious ceremony, at Easter 1802, she jokingly said to her son: "Ah! it will not be necessary for me now to box your ears to make you go to high mass." "No," replied Napoleon, "now it is for me to give you one;" and he gave her a slight slap (Roederer, "Journal," p. 112).

that is under my eyes and endures, which I can neither deny nor explain. I see nothing of the human in this. . . . What an abyss of distance between my misery and the eternal reign of Christ—preached, incensed, loved, adored, living through all the world. Is that death? Is it not rather life? Such is the death of Christ. It is that of God.”¹

The evidence supporting the authenticity of this noble passage is of the slightest. The words appeared in a work which was obviously designed to help on the Bonapartist revival of the year 1840. It was issued by the Chevalier de Beauterne, who is said to have been inspired by Count Montholon, Napoleon’s companion at St. Helena. But Montholon, during the exile, showed no attachment to religion any more than Bertrand. Judging from suspicious facts concerning the publication of de Beauterne’s volume, the opposition of the views there expressed to the opinions undoubtedly uttered by Napoleon during his last exile, and the striking differences of style, we may pronounce this eloquent rhapsody a later invention.¹

The following passage rests on better evidence, and is altogether more life-like (8th June 1816):

Everything proclaims the existence of a God: that is beyond a doubt; but all our religions are clearly the outcome of men. A man can swear to nothing that he will do in his last moments; yet undoubtedly my belief is that I shall die without a confessor; nevertheless there is one

¹ De Beauterne, “Sentiment de Napoléon sur le Christianisme,” ch. v.

² For other proofs see Rose, “Napoleonic Studies,” pp. 104-106

(pointing to one of us) who perhaps will confess me. Assuredly I am far from being an atheist; yet I cannot believe all that is taught contrary to reason, without being dishonest and a hypocrite. Under the Empire, and particularly after the marriage with Marie Louise, very great efforts were made to induce me to go to Notre Dame in full state to receive the communion after the manner of our kings. I refused absolutely. My faith was not strong enough for it to be a benefit to me, and yet was too great to commit a sacrilege in cold blood. . . . To know whence I come, what I am, whither I go, is beyond me; and yet all that is a reality. I am the watch that exists but does not understand itself. . . . I can appear before God's tribunal; I can await His judgment without fear. He will not detect in me the idea of murder, poisoning, unjust or premeditated death so common in careers like mine. I willed only the glory, the power, the splendour of France. To that all my faculties, my efforts, my time were given. That could not be a crime. To me those efforts appeared a virtue.¹

Here we notice a difference between this man of action and others who allow the mysteries of life to stunt their activity—backboneless creatures, for whom the riddles of philosophy furnish an excuse to herd with the most degraded followers of Epicurus. That state of mind is seductively portrayed in the following lines:

Into this universe, and *why* not knowing,
Nor whence, like water willy-nilly flowing;
And out of it as wind along the waste,
I know not whither, willy-nilly, blowing.

• • • • •

¹ Las Cases, "Mémorial," iv, 160-163.

Yesterday this day's madness did prepare;
To-morrow's silence, triumph or despair:
Drink! for you know not whence you came, nor why:
Drink! for you know not why you go, nor where.

No! Napoleon rarely strayed for long into the land of listless enchantment limned by Omar Khayyam. He never made it his abode. His unfailing energy saved him from that. Like Carlyle a generation later, he found that the best cure for baffling problems was, not to drift and drink, but to play the man and work. Whatever we may think of his creed, or lack of creed, assuredly we admire the frankness and fearlessness with which he confronted the deep things of life; and our sympathies go out to him, as, by the help of reason alone, he struggles up the world's great altar-stairs, uttering the questions that echo down the ages: "What am I?" "Why am I here?" "Who made all that?"

LECTURE VII

THE WORLD-RULER

"Nous sommes maîtres du monde."—NAPOLEON TO ROEDERER, 1st December 1800.

PROMINENT among the characteristics of the ancient Romans was their love of the gigantic. It informs alike their architecture and state policy, their public works and games. The traveller who comes from lands where labour is so dear as to necessitate economy of effort gazes with wonder at the huge amphitheatre of a comparatively small city like Verona,¹ at the enormous baths and aqueducts of Rome, and the "Villa" of Hadrian near Tivoli, containing enough materials to build a town of average size. To the Greeks beauty and symmetry were everything; to the Romans they counted for little unless combined with vastness. That characteristic lived on in mediæval Italy, and is responsible for the huge palaces, the solid and lofty towers which made a city a collection of fortresses, and the colossal churches out of all proportion to the needs of the population. The Roman ritual, literature and drama, in their several spheres testify to the Italian love of grandiosity.

¹ Napoleon wrote of it on 3rd June 1796: "Je viens de voir l'amphithéâtre: ce reste du peuple Romain est digne de lui. . Ici cent mille spectateurs sont assis."

The youthful studies of Napoleon, as we have seen, turned largely on the triumphs of ancient Rome. That theme wrought itself into the fibre of his being. Judge of his enthusiasm by the fact that he loved to pore over Caesar's "Gallic War." A youth who finds unfailing delight in that work must be a Roman at heart; and he who early made Caesar his hero set himself to be a greater than he. The glories of ancient Rome were a constant challenge to his activity. He sought to raise the Latin peoples from their lethargy, and on their basis rear a fabric which would equal, if not surpass, that of the Caesars.

The Roman strain in his nature impelled him in 1798 to the conquest of the Levant. In some respects this is the most venturesome enterprise of his career. While Central Europe and Italy chafed at the French yoke, and the Union Jack waved triumphant at sea, he proposed to seize Egypt and use it as a base for that grander enterprise, the conquest of India. In one important matter Bonaparte was far more daring than Alexander the Great, who, before setting out for Asia Minor, assured his communications with Europe by coming to an understanding with Athens, thus averting all risk of being cut off from his base of supplies. But Bonaparte could not answer for the British fleet. Doubtless it was this consideration which led the historian, Thiers, to pronounce the Egyptian enterprise of 1798 "the rashest attempt that history records: rasher even than Moscow. It contained the germ of Napoleon's subsequent life. It showed his marvellous powers of combination

and execution, and the wildness with which his imagination led him to despise moral and physical obstacles.”¹

Such are the words of an admirer. They are none too severe. After the battles of Cape St. Vincent and Camperdown the British fleet ruled the seas. Its withdrawal from the Mediterranean at the close of 1796 was a needed act of concentration which made those victories possible. Afterwards the British coasts were fairly safe, at least for a time; and it was the height of rashness for the young Corsican to assume that the Union Jack would not again wave in the Mediterranean. The miscalculation ruined his enterprise. After Nelson's victory at the Nile it was vain to attempt the larger scheme of a march to the Indus or to the Bosphorus. With his army cut off from France, he might hold on to Egypt; he could not possibly conquer the East. Yet still the dream haunted him. Possibly he had not fully realized the constricting effect of sea-power, which has been so ably explained by Captain Mahan; but, after all, that effect was well known by the rulers and generals of the eighteenth century; and examples of it can scarcely have escaped the ken of so diligent a student of war as Bonaparte. Certainly after the siege of Acre, when Sidney Smith captured his siege artillery at sea and turned it against the French, its efficacy in warfare could not be denied.

Nevertheless, he persisted down to his closing days, in saying that the mud walls of Acre came between

¹ N. Senior, "Conversations with Thiers, etc.," i, 198.

him and his destiny, the conquest of the East. Yet he must have known that the Battle of the Nile, not the repulse at Acre, was the turning-point of the whole enterprise. Acre was one result of the naval triumph; but there were other results—the non-arrival of reinforcements from France, the rising courage of the Moslems, the revolt of the Maltese, the discouragement of his own little force, and the resolve of the Sublime Porte to re-conquer Egypt. His army, now hard stricken by the plague, was utterly inadequate to conquer the East. Why, then, did he continue to harp on Acre as the turning point of his career? Two explanations may be suggested. Possibly he fastened his gaze too closely on what was, after all, only one of the manifestations of sea-power, the defence of Acre. Thus, several times at St. Helena he told his companions that Acre was a great misfortune. Once he blamed Kléber for cowardice in refusing to make an assault; and again he asserted that, if he had had four more twelve-pounders, he would have taken the place; or again, that if he could have moved with a picked body of French on India, he would have chased the British from it.¹

The other explanation is this; that, while fully realizing the cogency of sea-power, and the impossibility of carrying out his wider schemes, he deemed it advisable to fire the imagination of the Celts, both then and at a later time, by holding forth to their gaze the golden vision of the Empire of the East. True, it was lost, but by a mere accident, at Acre. Therefore

¹ Gourgaud, "Journal," i, 52; ii, 185, 315.

one day, under happier auspices, it could be realized. The latter explanation I think the more reasonable. It consorts with his keen intelligence and his knowledge of the hidden springs of human action. Make men, especially Frenchmen, believe that they are on the point of achieving the greatest exploit since the times of Alexander, and you double their energy. Refer the temporary failure to a picturesque incident like that of Acre, or to the plague, and you whet their appetite for a greater effort. Man is an imaginative being; and Napoleon, the great manipulator of men, knew well that the crown of the Moguls, which he held up before the French, would obliterate all memory of loss, and be a perpetual challenge to further crusades.

His good fortune in eluding Nelson's cruisers off Sicily and in reaching France at that crisis of her destinies, the autumn of 1799, hid from the gaze of Frenchmen the ruinous failure of the Egyptian expedition; and events during the next few years precluded him from a policy of adventure, and impelled him to the most solid and enduring of his works, the reorganization of France. But all this time vast schemes crowd his brain. By skilful exchanges in Italian domains he secures from Spain the reversion to Louisiana, and hopes, from San Domingo as base, to exploit that vast territory stretching as far as the Spanish claims in California.¹ He also projects a French settlement of Central Australia;² and it is

¹ E. L. Andrews, "Napoleon and America," 21-28.

² For the Napoleonic map of Australia, issued in 1807, see Rose, "Life of Napoleon," i, 382.

probable that the tightening of his grip on the Dutch Republic in 1801-2 preluded an occupation of its colonies, especially the Cape of Good Hope.

After becoming First Consul for life, in August 1802, his prospects of gaining a world-empire were very brilliant. In France and neighbouring States his will was law. He annexed Piedmont and Elba. Parma and Etruria were in effect under his control. French mediation in Switzerland assured the subjection of that land; and in Germany the series of robberies of Church lands, known as the Secularizations, furnished Napoleon with an effective means of enriching his henchmen and aggrandizing Bavaria and Prussia at the expense of Austria. Thus was fulfilled his prophecy expressed at Mombello in May 1797, that if the Germanic System did not exist, it would be necessary to create it expressly for the convenience of France.¹ Of the other Powers Russia was quiescent during the flirtation of the young Czar with Liberalism; while Great Britain, under the somnolent sway of George III and Addington, declined in strength and prestige. The United States were deeply agitated by the rumour of his expected acquisition of Louisiana; but as yet they could take no action against him. In a short time it even appeared that by a further shuffle of the cards in Italy he had the prospect of acquiring the Floridas. Further, at the Peace of Amiens, he had recovered all the French Colonies lost during the previous war. The Dutch possessions were virtually under his sway.

¹ "Nap. Corresp.," iii, 74.

Spain was his obedient vassal, and as yet showed little or no resentment at changes which portended the loss of Louisiana and Florida in return for paltry and insecure gains to a Spanish Infanta in Italy. India seemed likely to fall to him; for his dealings with the Mahrattas promised to range that formidable confederacy under the French tricolour and expel the Union Jack. The re-conquest of Egypt presented no difficulty. Sébastiani's Report on the Levant, published by Napoleon's order in the "Moniteur" of 30th January 1803, asserted that 6,000 French troops would easily overrun that land. As for the Ionian Isles, they longed to hoist the French tricolour.

It is well to remember these facts. In the year 1802 Napoleon had the world at his feet. As the Russian Government was soon to point out, the French in the last war lost as many battles as they gained; but in the interval of peace they succeeded in extending their domination enormously.¹ This was so. Napoleon won as much by diplomacy as by war. The conclusion of the Peace of Amiens by England and her acquiescence in subsequent events were calculated to endanger her existence, as that keen observer, Gouverneur Morris, clearly saw.² To resume; in 1802 Napoleon had the prospect of acquiring Louisiana, the Floridas, Egypt, and parts of India and Australia, together with the reversion to the Dutch Colonial Empire, and possibly to that of Spain. His position

¹ Garden, "Traité," ix, 341.

² "Diary and Letters of G. Morris" (New York, 1888), vol. ii, p. 445.

after Tilsit in 1807 was splendid. But in my judgement the situation in the year 1802 offered the best chance of securing an almost universal dominion.

Probably he would have succeeded for a time, provided that he remained quiet until the French navy was ready for action. Having at his disposal nearly all the shipyards from Amsterdam to Genoa, he might hope before long to challenge the naval supremacy of England. Meanwhile prudence counselled reserve and delay. She counselled in vain. The southern impetuosity of Napoleon's nature brooked no delay. Sébastiani's Report, followed six weeks later by the despatch of General Decaen's expedition to India, alarmed the British Government.¹ As a compensation to the gains of France in the Mediterranean, it insisted on retaining Malta. This Napoleon refused; and the outcome was war (18th May 1803).

A duel with England for the empire of the world was perhaps inevitable; for the domination of the East lay very near his heart; and that alone involved a life-and-death struggle with the British Empire. But the outbreak of war came about two years too soon for him. The secret instructions which he drew up in the middle of January 1803 for the guidance of General Decaen bade him enter into friendly relations with all who sought to throw off the yoke of the English, "the tyrants of India." The outbreak of war in India by September 1804 is named as probable, and as likely to involve the Dutch Republic. If outnumbered at the outset, Decaen is to retire to

¹ Mr. O. Browning, "England and Napoleon," p. 137.

Mauritius or the Cape of Good Hope. If he plays his part skilfully, he is led to hope for "the supreme glory which hands down the memory of men beyond the lapse of centuries."¹

That might have been the result had Napoleon been content to play a waiting game until his navy was strong. But this is the weak side of his character. He could not play a waiting game. He was too eager and self-willed. We can now I think, see what would have been his best policy. He should have played with England for a couple of years, until the superior shipbuilding resources of France, Holland, North Italy, and probably Spain, would tilt the balance against her at sea. Diplomatic dalliance respecting Malta, Lampedusa, and other questions was possible; for the timid Addington Cabinet did not want war, except as ending a situation in which peace was more dangerous than war. That you will see by carefully perusing the despatches which passed between London and Paris before the rupture.² In the long run, as I have said, a conflict was perhaps inevitable; but it was bad policy for Napoleon not to patch matters up for the present in order that he might strike with greater effect in the near future. By holding to all his demands, and rejecting England's claim for territorial compensation, he led her to take the path which proved to be the only path of safety, immediate war.

Even before matters came to a crisis he saw the

¹ M. Dumas, "Précis des Événements," xi, 189; "Méms. et Journaux du Gén. Decaen," vol. ii, pp. 250 *et seq.*

² Mr. O. Browning, *op. cit.*, *passim.*

impossibility of retaining Louisiana. His decision to sell that vast territory to the United States is of abiding interest and importance. It ended the plans of France to gain the upper hand in North America; and it enabled the United States for a ludicrously small sum (60,000,000 francs) to stretch their borders as far as the Spanish territory in California. It further brought about a strong fellow-feeling between the United States and Napoleon. Viewing the affair from his standpoint, which alone concerns us here, we may say that he gained considerably by securing the good will of the United States for the near future. Whether, in the interests of the French race, he should not have held on to Louisiana, is another question. He would have had trouble with the United States, but, on the other hand, France might perhaps have retained her former possession; and, if peace had soon been restored in Europe, she might even have colonized parts of that great territory by her sons who were to perish almost uselessly in Napoleon's campaigns.

All this is bound up with the question of peace or war. By the close of 1802 Napoleon had to decide, firstly, whether he would proceed with his oriental plans, which involved war with England and, incidentally, the sale of Louisiana; or, secondly, whether he would compromise matters with England in the East, thereby assuring peace at least for a time, and keeping his hold on the prairies of the West. He made his choice; and, as we can now see, that choice tended to war in the Old World and to the peaceful progress of the United States. One word more on

this topic. Whatever we may think of the wisdom or unwisdom of his choice, he did well not to hold on at all points, I mean both in regard to Louisiana and his oriental schemes. In the year 1802 his intellect was keen enough, his judgement sound enough, to foresee the consequences of offending both Great Britain and the United States. We shall soon have occasion to notice the hardening of his resolve by the year 1812 to persist in his demands at all quarters of the political compass.

The consequences of the rupture with England before his navy was ready became apparent at Trafalgar. Meanwhile on land his annexation of Genoa in June 1805 brought to birth a new Coalition which diverted his energies from the Boulogne flotilla to the armies of Austria and Russia. Hence Ulm and Austerlitz. The autumn which saw the Union Jack successful at sea witnessed the equally decisive triumphs of the tricolour in Central Europe. He made little of Trafalgar, and ordered that all the French cruisers destined for a war against British commerce should sail as formerly arranged.¹ Probably he longed far more for the humiliation of England than of Austria and Russia. On the eve of Austerlitz he uttered the memorable words: "This old Europe wearies me." His chief aim was ships, colonies, a World-Empire.²

¹ "Nap. Corresp.," xi, 214-217, 374, 424.

² The many-sidedness of his schemes and the restlessness of the man are illustrated by a curious fact. It appears that during nearly ten years which elapsed from 1805 to 1814 Napoleon was absent from Paris or its neighbourhood more than seven years

Trafalgar and Austerlitz altered the course of his career. Trafalgar made impossible the *rôle* of Alexander the Great; but Austerlitz placed in his hands the sceptre of Charlemagne. Here was a glorious sphere, and one for which his own character and the tendency of the times uniquely fitted him. Had he been content to give up the wider vision, the mastery of the Orient, and to be satisfied with the organization of the lands between the Elbe and the Pyrenees, success would probably have crowned his efforts. Western and Southern Germany were in a state of chaos. Goethe and many other Germans looked on Napoleon as the man predestined to summon their long-divided countrymen to a larger unity, a more beneficent activity. As the new Charlemagne, Napoleon appealed to the historic imagination of that people, calling them away from the petty particularism of their two hundred States and Free Cities to a cosmopolitan life centring at Paris. In the years 1806-11 he swept away Imperial villages and knightly domains, and in other ways remodelled the map of South and West Germany. For all important purposes the Rhenish Confederation formed one realm, in which Napoleon's will was supreme. Feudalism went by the board, and civic equality and religious toleration formed the basis of a new polity in which peasants, burghers, and Jews saw the dawn of a brighter day. The working of the new system showed some curious inequalities;¹ but in all. Bondoï, "Napoléon et la Société de son Temps," p. 185.

¹ Fisher, "Napoleonic Statesmanship: Germany," pp. 264-267, 313, 329, 361, 368.

on the whole Germany gained enormously in respect of equality and facilities for extended trade.

Napoleon used every possible effort to conciliate public opinion in Germany, witness these words to a deputation of leading men from the new Kingdom of Westphalia in August 1807: "Religion is an affair of conscience, not of the State. Small States are no good. You will have a great Kingdom, reaching perhaps to Hamburg. The soldiers are to protect, not to quell you. The nobility is not to count. He who distinguishes himself and shows merit is to be promoted. Kings exist, not for themselves, but for the happiness of their people." By all possible means he sought to turn away the thoughts of Germans from Vienna and Berlin towards Paris. To us that now seems a chimerical enterprise. But in those years, when German sentiment had scarcely awakened at the trumpet calls of Fichte and Arndt, success was possible. Cosmopolitan sentiment held sway at the Universities and in literature, as appears in the earlier writings of Fichte and Schiller. Not until after 1806, and then only by slow degrees, did German feeling turn away from Paris and towards Berlin. Meanwhile Napoleon did much to conciliate public opinion beyond the Rhine. The Code Napoléon acted as a Gallicizing influence; and its author sought to popularize the use of the French language. On one occasion he visited the *lycée* of Mainz, walked into one of the upper classes and examined the boys in Latin and Mathematics.¹

¹ Fisher, "Napoleonic Statesmanship: Germany," pp. 229, 364.

In regard to commerce he opened up a new future both for Germany and Italy. As we saw, he planned the canal joining the Rhine and Rhone; and at Elba, early in 1815, he told Major Vivian that he had intended to make one between the Rhine basin and the Upper Danube; it would cost only 20,000,000 francs. In the same interview he showed keen interest in the roads leading over the passes between France and Italy. When Vivian remarked that the road over the Col di Tenda was bad, the Emperor at once replied it was not his making. He asked whether his bridge over the Rhone at Avignon was yet finished, and remarked on the expense of a fine road which he had begun from Wesel to Hamburg. He also inquired as to the state of the road over the Simplon, an engineering feat of which he was very proud.¹ Indeed, one of the finest monuments to his memory is the great tunnel or gallery of Gondo, with its commemorative tablet, "Via Napoleone 1807-1812."

Popular imagination always magnifies the exploits of great men. It ascribes to Alfred the Great the University of Oxford and trial by jury. As the French proverb says, "*on ne donne qu'aux riches.*" Therefore I was not surprised to hear from an hotel-keeper on Lake Maggiore, before whose door ran the Simplon-Milan road, that Napoleon made that road all the

¹ Rose, "Pitt and Napoleon: Essays and Letters," p. 169. Dr. Guyot, "Le Directoire et la Paix d'Europe" (ch. 14), has shown that Bonaparte's resolve to control the Simplon Road largely accounts for the French invasion of Switzerland in 1798. It determined the annexation of Valais in 1810.

way from Paris to Milan. This curious exaggeration is not without significance. It is an unconscious tribute to the greatness of Napoleon. His personality stirred the popular imagination as no one had stirred it ; and therefore men take pleasure in assigning everything to him. Legend never showered garlands of bays haphazard on George III or Louis XVIII.

Among the uncompleted plans of Napoleon for the benefit of neighbouring peoples those respecting Rome have a special interest. He loved Rome intensely. In the year 1802, when Canova was making his bust he talked incessantly about Rome, walking to and fro the while, pouring forth his thoughts about the heroes described by Livy, and then, anon, speaking bitterly about the Rome of the Popes and enthusiastically about the Rome of the Caesars. When the sculptor mentioned Titus, Trajan, Marcus Aurelius, he exclaimed, "Yes ! They were all great." Even the gladiatorial games pleased him. At St. Helena he said that they were the only form of tragedy fit for the robust frames and steel-like nerves of the Romans. He desired to restore Rome : to build new palaces, new colleges, new canals, new roads. But, as was his rule, he postponed these public works until he could visit the Eternal City as its Emperor, and show to it the little King of Rome. That dream haunted him through the year 1811. He planned the visit for 1812, the year of Moscow.

Why did this intelligent cosmopolitanism break down ? Partly, no doubt, because it was ahead of its

time. The peoples, so it seems, have to work their way to it through the intermediate stage in which we now are, namely, nationalism. As Mazzini has well said, nationality is the ladder reaching to the higher level of cosmopolitanism. To leap from the crude and chaotic conditions prevalent in Central Europe a century ago to the state of universal brotherhood was far too great an effort. Possibly nationalism will have to exhaust itself by armaments before the higher ideal attracts mankind with irresistible force. Certainly Europe in 1806-11 was not ready for the formation of a cosmopolitan Empire stretching from the Baltic to the Mediterranean. Germans, Dutch, Swiss, French, Italians and Spaniards could with difficulty be brought together into a loose kind of federation, still less into a system in which Napoleonic France figured as predominant partner. So soon as we formulate our ideas clearly on this topic, we see its immense complexity. The only condition on which the United States of Europe could be formed was the entire passivity of the federating peoples. But in 1806 those peoples were not passive; they were beginning to awake to a conscious national life. The formation of a great composite Empire, or even of a federation of States, is the most difficult task, as you know from the early history of the American Union. In America the conditions favoured federation—community of race, language, sentiment, and to some extent of interests. Yet for several years the question of the Union wavered in the balance; and, but for the tact and moderation of your early statesmen, that Union would perhaps never

have come to pass. A comparison of Napoleon with Jefferson, Hamilton or Washington, goes far towards explaining his failure to keep very diverse peoples under his sway.

‘The first of political virtues in a federal ruler are tact, forbearance, patience. Napoleon’s nature was not rich in these qualities. It was remarkable rather for impetuosity. By the year 1806, he had become accustomed to have his way everywhere. Good fortune had spoiled him. As he sorrowfully said at St. Helena—“I must admit that I was spoiled: I always gave orders; from my birth power was mine; I rejected a master or a law.”¹ That is not the man who will conciliate diverse peoples. Further, the Continental System, by which he sought to assure the commercial ruin of England, imposed very heavy burdens on North Germany, Holland, Italy, and other vassal States, so that what they gained by his Code and his engineering feats they lost by that great fiscal experiment and the resulting wars. By the year 1815 he had learnt wisdom. At that time he sincerely desired to arrive at a compromise between the interests of France and those of neighbouring States. But in the intervening time he had aroused so much distrust and hatred as to vitiate all such attempts. At St. Helena, amidst the sobering influences of adversity, he discerned the weak points of his career, and laboured to slur them over by asserting that at no point of his career could he have acted otherwise, and that in Europe it was impossible to be a

¹ Las Cases, “*Mémoires*,” vii, 45.

Washington. True, but he might have been a peaceful First Consul, content with the splendid position attained by the Peace of Amiens, and refraining from the restless eastern policy and the annexation of Genoa which opened out new vistas of war in 1803 and 1805 respectively. Moreover his claim to have been working for a European federation is vitiated by his assertion that he could attain it only by a universal dictatorship, above all, by triumphing at Moscow in 1812.¹ Not by those methods could Europe gain peace, fraternity and federation.

For, as we have seen, in the days of his power he relied mainly on external control, and in the last resort on force. If he could not convince the Germans of the excellence of his rule, he would coerce them. Hence such abominable acts as the summary execution of Palm, the Nuremberg bookseller, for the crime of selling a patriotic pamphlet. This episode does not stand alone. Writing at Warsaw early in 1807 respecting a rising near Cassel, he orders that the village where it started should be burned, and thirty ring-leaders shot, 200 or 300 others being sent as prisoners to France. A little later he orders the execution of sixty men.² Again and again one finds similar mathematical calculations as to the numbers who must be shot, in order to repress local riots. On 3rd July 1809, he commands the execution of six men at Nuremberg; and on 28th January 1813, of the same number at a

¹ Las Cases, "Mémorial," i, 467-469.

² "Nap. Corresp.," xiv, 171. 213.

place near Elberfeld.¹ On 5th March 1813 he orders Eugène, commanding the French troops at Berlin, to burn down that city, if necessary, so as to make an example.²

These rigorous customs were also enforced in Italy. In consequence his rule, which that oppressed and divided people had formerly hailed as the guarantee of freedom and unity, now aroused general antipathy. The enthusiastic Italian patriot, d'Azeglio, has described in glowing terms the excitement of the men of Turin at the news of Napoleon's disaster in Russia, their astonishment that he could fail at any point, and their infinite joy at the fall of "the vastest and most invincible of tyrannies." True, that joy was soon to vanish on the substitution of the weak yet exasperating rule of Victor Emmanuel I—"Napoleon clad as a Jesuit: the lance of Achilles in the hand of Thersites." For it is the lot of mankind to stumble from one blunder to another. But the testimony of d'Azeglio and other Italian Liberals shows that the Napoleonic *régime* had become insupportable even in the land where formerly it was most beneficent.³

The new Charlemagne further committed the very serious mistake of treating the Pope with unmerited harshness. The First Consul, who in 1801-2 arranged with the Vatican that salutary compact, the Concordat, was a very different man from the Emperor Napoleon, who in and after 1807 sought to overbear

¹ Lecestre, "Lettres inédites de Nap.," i, 322; ii, 212.

² "Nap. Corresp.," xxv, 31.

³ M. d'Azeglio, "I miei Ricordi," ch. viii.

the conscientious scruples of the Pontiff. It is not easy to account for the change; for surely the successor of Caesar should have sought to retain the support of the successor of Peter. But after the Treaty of Tilsit (July 1807), which laid Europe at his feet, pride dictated his policy. A fortnight after that compact he fired off at Pius VII an extraordinary letter. As afterwards appeared on more than one occasion, he was never more in his element than when preaching to the head of the Church on the virtue of unworldliness. Taking as his text the words of Christ—"My kingdom is not of this world," he bids the Pope ponder on them. He declares that the Pontiff cannot surely believe that God considers the rights of the throne as less sacred than those of the papal tiara; for kings existed long before Popes.¹ If Pius denounces Napoleon to Christendom, the latter will treat him as Antichrist sent to turn the world upside down, and will withdraw his peoples from the Roman Communion. For ten years the Vatican has been preaching rebellion. Does the Pope mean to excommunicate him?—"Does he think that the weapons will drop from the hands of the French troops? Will he put daggers in the hands of my peoples to assassinate me?" . . . "Does he take me for Louis le Debonnaire?" . . . "The present Pope is too powerful. Priests are not made to govern. Let them imitate St. Peter, St. Paul, and the holy apostles,

¹ "Nap. Corresp.," xv, 442-445. With Italian finesse he sends the letter to Eugène to forward to the Vatican with a covering letter, stating that the letter was really private and not meant to be shown to the Pope!

who are worth more than the Juliuses, the Bonifaces, the Gregories, the Leos. Jesus Christ declared that His Kingdom is not of this world. Why will not the Pope render to Caesar what is due to Caesar? Is he greater on earth than Jesus Christ was?"—And so on. The succession of short, sharp, imperious sentences is truly Napoleonic. They recall the orders of the parade ground. Or again they remind us of the epithet applied to his style by one of his early teachers, volcanic. Finally, be it remembered that these were not empty threats. When the differences between them became irreconcilable, Napoleon gave a practical application to his homily on unworldliness by dethroning the Pope and detaining him at Savona. There early in the year 1811, because Pius VII forbade the chapter of Florence to recognize Napoleon's nominee to that archbishopric, Napoleon wrote a furious letter to Prince Borghese, Governor of the Transalpine Province, ordering him to press severely on the Pontiff.

. . . As I desire to protect my subjects from the rage and fury of this ignorant and peevish old man, I hereby order you to notify him, that he is forbidden to communicate with any Church of mine, or any of my subjects, on pain of the punishment consequent on his disobedience, and theirs. You will remove all suspicious persons from the Pope's household. You will leave only the number of persons necessary to wait on him, and you will not permit any one of any kind to visit him. You will take steps to increase the garrison of Savona. You will take care to have all the Pope's papers, books, and documents taken from him, and

you will have them sent to Paris. If the Pope should indulge in any extravagant behaviour, you will have him shut up in the citadel of Savona, which you will have taken care to provision, and furnish with all necessaries beforehand. . . . The examination of the Pope's papers must be skilfully done. You will leave him no paper, nor pens, nor ink, nor any means of writing. You will give him a few French servants, and you will remove the unsatisfactory ones. Besides this, the people of his household can be forbidden to go out.¹

Thereafter the Pope was removed to Fontainebleau and treated with rigour.

During these years the new Charlemagne plunged into enterprises which proved to be beyond even his strength. Though it was surely enough to try to control the Continent, he in 1807 set on foot plans of alliance with Persia with a view to an eventual march of a Franco-Russian army from the Persian Gulf towards the Indus and Delhi. He sent General Gardane on a mission to Teheran for that purpose.² After Tilsit he concerted with the Czar Alexander a scheme for the partition of Turkey, leading up to further immense changes in the Orient. He writes to Alexander on 2nd February, that within a month after framing their compact their united forces can be on the Bosphorus. This will be but the beginning. If England does not then submit—and she has shown

¹ Lecestre, "Lettres inédites de Nap.," ii, 102.

² Gardane, "La Mission du Général Gardane," *passim*; E. Driault, "La Politique orientale de Nap.," pp. 58-72.

no sign of submission—the two Empires will march on the East. He adds these characteristic words:

On the 1st May our troops can be in Asia, and at the same time those of Your Majesty can be at Stockholm. Then the English, threatened in the East, chased from the Levant, will be crushed under the weight of events with which the atmosphere will be charged. Your Majesty and I would have preferred the sweets of peace and to pass our lives in the midst of our vast Empires, occupied in invigorating them and making them happy by the arts and the benefits of our administration. The enemies of the world (the English) will otherwise. We must be greater, in spite of ourselves. It is a sign of wisdom and of policy to do what Fate orders, and to go where the irresistible march of events conducts us. Then this crowd of pygmies who refuse to see that present events are such that we must seek their parallel in history, not in eighteenth-century gazettes, will give way and will follow the movement ordered by Your Majesty and myself: and the Russian peoples will be happy with the glory, wealth and fortune resulting from these great events. In these few lines I express to Your Majesty my entire soul. The work of Tilsit will regulate the destinies of the world.

Is this the language of fatalism? Or is it the outpouring of a mighty soul, which sees in fatalism a lever for moving the world? Note the words “to do what Fate orders,” followed by the phrase “the movement ordered by your Majesty and myself.” The latter surely interprets the former. But, however we interpret this appeal to Fate, we cannot but admire the soaring imagination which outlines these vast projects, the Ossianic touches which commend them to

the Czar, and the Herculean force which bends the European fabric eastwards for their accomplishment.

Nevertheless, it was an error of judgement to set about these mighty schemes while Europe still heaved with war. The realm of the modern Charlemagne needed time for consolidation. The most successful rulers of the eighteenth century, Frederick the Great and Catharine II of Russia, knew when it was time to rest on their laurels; and by the cautious conservatism of later life they succeeded in retaining the conquests of their earlier days. Napoleon could not rest. At that time (February 1808) his troops and those of his ally, Spain, had occupied Portugal; and already the alluring thought was taking shape that he would dethrone the Spanish Bourbons. As we saw in Lecture I, he owed them a grudge for their conduct during the Jena campaign; and he cherished the hope that, as lord of Central and South America (then mainly Spanish) and the wielder of the armed forces of Spain, he would throw his sword decisively into the balance, whether in the West or the East. For the present, as his letters show, the East was his goal. But he intended to use Spain and the bullion which she drained from the West so as to help on the Oriental adventure. This, as it seems to me, is the crowning reason for his virtual annexation of Spain. Adapting Canning's famous phrase, we may say that he called in Spain and the New World to help him overturn the Old World.

Five years of continual triumph have left their mark on his character. At the close of 1802, as we

saw, he judged it imprudent to persevere with a forward policy both in the Western and Eastern hemispheres, and therefore sold Louisiana to the United States in order to be free for the Eastern crusade. Now, in the spring of 1808, he faces the consequences of both enterprises. Master of Central and Southern America, he must sooner or later arouse fears at Washington. Ruler of most of the Orient, he must awaken jealousy at St. Petersburg. But he recks not of either. Still less does he foresee any resistance in Spain itself. Read his letters of the spring of 1808. They are of deep interest. While pensioning off Charles IV and his recalcitrant son, he bids Murat and Junot, then at Madrid and Lisbon, to prepare all the available Spanish and Portuguese men-of-war. General Dupont is to hurry southward to Cadiz to secure the five French men-of-war which had sought refuge there after Trafalgar. At all the dockyards the Spanish navy is to be resuscitated, the aim being to use at least 28 sail-of-the-line for an Oriental expedition. He intends that his Toulon armada shall embark 20,000 men in South Italy and sail to Egypt. As for the Spaniards, they will rejoice at the activity in their dockyards. England is too much harassed by these threatened attacks to be able to send troops to help Portugal; and he, Napoleon, will strike heavy blows at the end of the season,¹ obviously at Turkey and Egypt. Such are his thoughts in the middle of May 1808, even after hearing full particulars of the

¹ "Nap. Corresp.," xvii, 76, 80, 83, 85, 109, 113, 116, 119, 122, 135, 143, 150, 159, 163.

desperate rising of the men of Madrid against the French troops. He calls that an "alerte." In the genuine letters of Napoleon there is not a sign that he foresaw the Spanish national rising of May-June. True, in the letter of 29th March 1808, which finds a place in the official "Correspondence," he speaks as a cautious philosopher, advising Murat to be very careful how he treats the Spaniards, who are a young people, full of enthusiasm and courage, unexhausted by political passions. But that letter is almost certainly a forgery concocted by Las Cases at St. Helena.¹ The genuine letters of that period breathe an entirely different spirit.

A few days before the rising in Madrid he writes to Murat at that city, upbraiding him thus: "Your order of the day to the troops about the Burgos riot is a wretched thing. Good God! where should we be if I were to write four pages to the soldiers, to tell them not to allow themselves to be disarmed, and to quote the fact that a guard of fifteen men fired on the mob as a trait of heroism? Frenchmen are too clever not to laugh at such proclamations. You never learnt that in my school." And he continues: "To bring order into the city of Madrid 3,000 troops and 10 cannon are needed. Three orders of the day like yours would demoralize an army."² Place this undoubtedly genuine letter over against the St. Helena effusion,

¹ The original is in Las Cases, "Mémorial," iv, 246-254. See proofs of the forgery given by Comte Murat in "Murat, Lieutenant de l'Empereur en Espagne," pp. 145 *et seq.*

² Lecestre, "Lettres inédites de Nap.," i, 185.

and the non-authenticity of the latter is evident. It was concocted in order to screen Napoleon and blame Murat for the Spanish rising. In all the other letters of that time Napoleon treats the Spaniards as a negligible quantity. After their effervescence has died down, they will send valued help to the expeditions destined to effect the partition of the Turkish Empire and the overthrow of the British power in India. "England," so he writes on 17th May, "is in great penury there, and the arrival of an expedition would ruin the colony from top to bottom." As for the columns of General Dupont, now on the march towards Cadiz they are strong enough to go anywhere in Spain.¹

As a revelation of character and of the causes that go to make history, Napoleon's letters of April and May 1808 are of unequalled interest. Their length, minuteness, and eagerness enable us to look right into his brain. In those eighty-three closely printed pages may be seen the development of the most grandiose designs known to authentic history and the reasons for their ultimate collapse. The great man planned the acquisition of Spain as a prelude to the conquest of Sicily which, in its turn, would help on the partition of the Turkish Empire and the conquest of Egypt. And this was not all. A powerful expedition was to sail for India; while light squadrons harried British commerce on every sea. In the accomplishment of these designs the Spanish navy held a prominent place. It was to furnish at least 28 sail-of-the-line,

¹ "Nap. Corresp.," xvii, 122, 149.

besides frigates and smaller vessels; and Napoleon intended that the naval resources of the coasts between the Texel and Genoa should reverse the verdict of Trafalgar, make the Mediterranean a French lake, and ensure the conquest of the East.

All rested on the assumption of continued support from Spain. And if that land were judged from its decadent Court and spiritless grandees, the conclusion seemed inevitable. But Napoleon, who in his youth thought solely of nations and nothing of Courts, had now swung to the opposite extreme. He judged the Spanish nation by its despicable monarch. Events soon showed the mistake. Madrid defied Murat's whole force in hours of desperate fighting. Dupont did not march anywhere at will, he did not free the five French warships at Cadiz, but was cooped up and compelled to surrender with 22,800 men at Baylen in Andalusia (22nd July). That was by far the heaviest blow yet dealt to Napoleon. For the present it ended his dreams of a World-Empire and compelled him to turn against Spain the forces destined for the conquest of the Orient. He had hoped soon to partition the Turkish Empire, overturn Britain's rule in the East, and assure her surrender. But now he had to spend six campaigns in fighting Spain and Wellington. In a military sense he at first seemed sure of success. In 1809 he crushed Austria, and the years 1810-11 saw him undisputed master, except in Portugal and the corners of Spain. But so long as the Peninsular War dragged on, he could not turn his undivided energies to the East. During the meeting at

Erfurt in September 1808 he failed to remove the suspicions or fears of the Czar Alexander; and the continuance of the Peninsular War encouraged that potentate to withdraw from the Continental System at the close of 1811, a step which brought on the campaign of 1812.

There again the rigidity of Napoleon's policy provoked a conflict, the magnitude of which was out of all proportion to its ostensible causes. Apart from the fiscal question just stated, there was no very serious dispute between the two Emperors. The partition of the Turkish Empire had of course been postponed. The Polish Question was susceptible of arrangement; and a German principality might have been found for the Czar's brother-in-law, the Grand Duke of Oldenburg, whom Napoleon had brusquely dethroned at the close of 1810. Moreover it was surely better to allow a compromise on the Continental System rather than risk all on a campaign in Russia while a quarter of a million of French troops were warring in Spain. But Napoleon would not give way at any point. Rather than do so, he marshalled an army of more than 600,000 for the overthrow of Russia; and it is a sign of his power that of this immense host France furnished scarcely the half; 1812 is Napoleon's crusade. A young German Jew described in words of fire the impression left on his mind by the sight of the Emperor looking on at his Guards as they filed out eastwards. "For ever I see him high on horseback, the eternal eyes set in the marble of that imperial visage, looking on with the calm of destiny at his Guards as they

march past. He was sending them then to Russia, and the old Grenadiers glanced up at him with so awesome a devotion, so sympathetic an earnestness, with the pride of death:

"Te, Caesar, morituri salutant."¹

Those words of Heine help to explain the riddle of a century ago. For it was a riddle even then; and it is doubly so to-day now that we know all the facts. Not one of the many thousands of Germans, Italians, Swiss, and Dutch who crossed the Niemen could have said why they did so, except that Napoleon had given the command. Some of them perhaps hoped to re-establish the Continental System in order to break down what was called England's maritime tyranny. But by that time the Continental System was far more burdensome than the British naval decrees which were designed to defeat it. Every North German knew that. Did they march to Moscow to compel Russia once more to exclude British goods? That was a futile effort, as many of them knew; for no small part of the overcoats worn by the Grand Army came from Yorkshire.

A curious incident illustrative of character is told by Count de Narbonne, Napoleon's envoy bearing the ultimatum to the Czar. Alexander finally said to Narbonne—"What does the Emperor want? Would he force me to adopt measures that would ruin my people? And, because I refuse, does he threaten me with war, because he imagines that, after two or three

¹ Heine, "Englische Fragmente" (Wellington).

battles, and the occupation of a few provinces or a capital city, he will succeed in making me sue for a peace, of which he will dictate the terms? He is mistaken." Then, taking a large map of his States, he slowly unfolded it upon the table and continued—"M. le Comte, I believe that Napoleon is the greatest general in Europe, that his armies are the most warlike, his lieutenants the most valiant and experienced. But space is a barrier. If, after several defeats, I retire, sweeping the inhabitants with me—if I abandon the care of my defence to time, to the climate, to the desert, perhaps *I* may have the last word to say on the fate of the most formidable army of modern times.'"¹ Narbonne on his return reported these words faithfully to Napoleon. Nevertheless, the Emperor marched to Moscow.

The dream of a World-Empire vanished at that city: but even after losing nearly half a million of men in Russia, he refused to come to terms with Austria during the armistice in the middle of the Saxon Campaign of 1813. Her demands were not exorbitant. Napoleon would retain the Rhine frontier and his possessions in Italy, but surrender the Illyrian Provinces and his control over Germany. These

¹ "Mems. of Comte de Rambuteau" (Eng. edit.), pp. 67, 68. All who knew Napoleon well foresaw utter ruin as the end of that astonishing career. The Councillors of State must have seen the handwriting on the wall, when he uttered to them these fateful words: "I have achieved the greatest success known to history. Well! In order that I may leave the throne to my children, I must be master of all the capitals of Europe" (*ibid.*, p. 55).

terms were not excessive, in view of the French disaster at Vittoria. Napoleon would still rule over a far larger realm than Louis XIV. Again it fell to Count Narbonne at Dresden to advise the Emperor to take the prudent course and thereby secure the neutrality of Austria. "Sire," he said, "France has given you her last man and her last crown. You have 30,000 men on horseback; but they do not form a body of real cavalry; your regiments are filled with conscripts, brave but not inured to war, who may win a battle, but cannot stand a reverse or a retreat. The first check we experience will mean ruin for France and for you; for now we have the whole of Europe against us. A peace, though it were only a truce, would save us. Conclude one, even if only for two years. During that time you can consolidate all the elements of your power: we shall be able to sow disunion among our enemies, and you will try your fortune anew. . . . Peace is necessary; and it is my devotion, my loyalty to your person, that makes me ask it on my knees."¹ Caulaincourt and other devoted servants urged the same arguments, but all to no effect. As the young de Broglie said of the Emperor—"The devil was in him: he spared neither entreaties, promises, nor threats [to Austria] even at the risk of hastening the dénouement."² It came speedily. Austria joined the Allies; and the result was Leipzig and the loss of another great army, uselessly engulfed in Germany.

As if the campaign in Germany were not enough,

¹ Rambuteau, "Méms.," pp. 92, 93.

² Broglie, "Méms." (Eng. edit.), i, 209.

Napoleon clung on to Spain, or as much of it as his troops could hold. At a later time he admitted his folly in not recalling his troops from Spain at the end of 1812, a step which would have released about 200,000 troops for service in Germany. Yet, even at the close of 1813 he did not definitely take that step; and Marshal Suchet held on to Catalonia while Napoleon was fighting for France herself in the plains of Champagne.

There must have been something in Napoleon's nature which defied all thought of surrender or of compromise. An example of this inflexible tenacity appeared in November 1813, after his return from the German campaign. Joseph Bonaparte, driven from Spain after the disaster of Vittoria, was living in disgrace, almost as a prisoner, at Mortfontaine. Napoleon employed Roederer as a go-between, and expressed to him his disgust at the apathy and incompetence of Joseph, which had helped to ruin his fortunes in the Peninsula, declaring (as was largely true) that if he himself had governed Spain, things would have gone very differently; for Joseph was always thinking about women, or his houses, or his furniture. "As for me (blazed forth Napoleon) I care little about St. Cloud or the Tuileries. I should care little if they were burnt. I count my houses as nothing, women as nothing, my son as—a little. I leave one place, I go to another. I leave St. Cloud, I go to Moscow, not for my own wish, or for my friends, but merely by hard, dry calculation. I have sacrificed thousands, hundreds of thousands of men to make Joseph King of Spain. It

is one of my faults to have believed my brothers necessary to assure my dynasty. My dynasty is assured without them. It will have been founded amidst storms by the force of events. The Empress is enough to assure it. She has more wisdom and more policy than all of them. Jerome has ruined my affairs in Germany. To-day I would not give a hair to have Joseph in Spain rather than Ferdinand. The Spaniards will always be united to France for their interest. Ferdinand will no more oppose me than Joseph would."¹ This glorifying of hard, dry reasoning is very curious; for in this passage Napoleon bounds from one assumption to another. Never, assuredly, has calculation been more fertile in miscalculations.

It is extraordinary that so keen an historical student as Napoleon should not have seen that he could not figure both as Alexander the Great and Charlemagne. The domination of Europe and the conquest of the East were absolutely incompatible tasks. That was the outstanding lesson of the reign of Louis XV. To war against the British in Bengal and Ohio while combating Frederick the Great in Germany was far beyond the capacity of Louis XV. Napoleon could well attempt far more; but it was madness for him to seek to hold down Madrid, Naples, Berlin, and to cow Austria and Russia, while also arranging for the partition of Turkey and the conquest of India. His policy could not be both European and Oriental. The great colonizing peoples, from the time of Crete,

¹ Roederer, "Journal," p. 323.

Tyre, Carthage and Athens, down to the days of Venice, Portugal, Holland and Great Britain, have mainly been content to play a secondary part on land provided that they could be great at sea.¹ Islanders have often achieved success as colonizers because nature herself forbade any serious distraction of aim in continental wars. When Henry VIII seemed likely to drag England again into profitless wars in France, that clear-sighted historian, Lord Herbert of Cherbury, uttered this warning: "Let us, in God's name, leave off our attempts against the *terra firma*. The natural situation of islands seems not to consort with conquests in that kind. England alone is a just Empire. Or, when we would enlarge ourselves, let it be that way which, it seems, the eternal Providence hath destined us, which is by sea. The Indies are discovered, and vast treasure brought from thence every day. Let us therefore bend our endeavours thitherward, and if the Spaniards and Portuguese suffer us not to join with them, there will yet be region enough for all to enjoy." That wise economy of effort has made the fortune of the British race. Whereas Powers like France and Spain, whose position embroiled them in European affairs, have been exhausted by the double effort of dominating the Continent and developing the new lands.

Napoleon had the most brilliant opportunity to make France the chief World-Power; for the French race was then at the height of its faculties and pres-

¹ Herodotus (iii, 122) attributes first to Minos and Polycrates in Crete the design to command the sea.

tige, while other peoples were inert or badly organized. Even so he failed. His failure resulted ultimately from defects of character. "Character is destiny," said Novalis; and the career of Napoleon proves the truth of the saying. In his early years the great man generally kept his impetuous nature under the control of reason. But, either because long years of overwork dulled his foresight, or from some physical cause hard to specify, or from the pride that grows with triumph, he gave the rein to his forceful impulses in and after 1807, with the results that we have seen. The passion for the grandiose became his besetting sin. He neglected favourable opportunities of coming to terms with the least bitter of his foes. He hoped by force and ability to shiver their Coalition; and his blows only hardened it. For by 1814 the Allies had cause to distrust his word; and their experience in the two previous years bade them war to the death against a man who flung to the void a million of men in the vain attempt to control all Europe.

LECTURE VIII

THE EXILE

“Je crois beaucoup aux pressentiments, moi ; et j’ai pour pressentiment que je finirai complètement mon entreprise, et que je laisserai la France puissante et prospère.”—NAPOLEON TO ROEDERER.

THERE is a considerable difference between Napoleon at Elba and at St. Helena. At Elba in 1814 he still had a good chance of regaining part of Italy, or even France. It is true that he denied this, and described himself as a dead man, occupied solely with his house, his cows and his mules.¹ But his conduct was not exactly that of a placid farmer; and there are other sayings which show him in a very different light. At St. Helena he told Gourgaud that, on leaving Fontainebleau for Elba he had no great hope of ever returning. “But,” he added, “the first hope came to me when I saw in the newspapers that at the banquet in the Hotel de Ville (at Paris) there were present only the wives of nobles, and no officers of the army.” “Louis XVIII” (he continued), “should have behaved reasonably, as the founder of the fifth dynasty. Then he could say—‘I replace Napoleon because he wanted to do too much.’ And that is true because I have taken up too many things.”²

¹ Neil Campbell, “Journal,” p. 299

² Gourgaud, “Journal,” ii, 302.

In this brief and incisive way did the Emperor explain his overthrow in the spring of 1814 and the ridiculous collapse of the Bourbons a year later. Their tactlessness in small things wounded French pride; Napoleon argued acutely in counting on the resentment of the uninvited *Parisiennes*. France had poured forth her best blood for a hero: she now scorned the antique pedantries of the gouty and unwarlike old exile brought back by foreigners.

Then again Napoleon must have remembered the advice of Narbonne at Dresden in 1813, to make peace betimes, even were it only for a year or two. The advantages of such a step were still more obvious after two more disastrous campaigns. In the spring of 1814 as many as 180,000 French prisoners came back from Russia, Germany, Spain, England. They came back to a small France. The Bourbons, not Napoleon, signed away the Rhine Provinces, Italy, Holland, Belgium. After his abdication at Fontainebleau he remarked to Bausset on this subject—"I abdicate and I yield nothing." He uttered these words with imperial serenity, and Bausset thought him singularly "calm, tranquil and decided." He spoke quite naturally about Elba and took up a book descriptive of the island, with the words: "The air there is healthy, and the inhabitants are excellent: I shall not be badly off."¹ Bausset was astonished at this preternatural calmness. I confess that I think it was partly founded on hope in the future. He knew the nullity of the Bourbons; he foresaw their unpopu-

¹ Bausset, "Cour de Napoléon," ch. xxxviii.

larity in ceding about one-third of the French Empire; and he must have seen in the return of a host of veterans a means of restoring France to her former position. Later on he declared that he had left Elba too soon owing to a rumour that the Congress of Vienna was dissolved.¹ But, if anything, he came back a little too late, namely, after the Powers had settled their disputes.

This element of hope invests his sojourn at Elba with unique interest. The wounded lion soon begins to prepare to spring at the over-confident captors. At St. Helena he soon ceases to hope, unless there is a revolution in England or throughout Europe. Elba is a piquant comedy; St. Helena is a long-drawn-out tragedy. During the voyage to Elba he is by no means depressed; he compliments Captain Ussher, of H.M.S. *Undaunted*, on his ship and crew, takes the keenest interest in all occurrences, remarking on one occasion that if he had been a Minister of England, he would have tried to make her the greatest Power of the world. Similarly at Fontainebleau he told Sir Neil Campbell that he admired the British more than any nation.²

During the voyage he spoke at length of his preparations to invade England, estimating that from the time of landing on British soil he would have been in London in three days. When asked what he would have done next, he said it was a difficult thing to answer, for so spirited a people as the British would

¹ Gourgaud, "Journal," p. 323.

² N. Campbell, "Journal," p. 159.

not have succumbed even then. But he counted on separating Ireland from England, and hoped that the collapse of British commerce and credit would compel a surrender.¹ At other times he said he relied on insurrections of Scottish and English Jacobins. In this connection it is of interest to note that Major Vivian, who visited Elba early in 1815, found the officers of the Imperial Guard decidedly of opinion that the expedition must have failed.² As usual, Napoleon cherished hopes far beyond those of his followers.

At Elba Napoleon was generally in high spirits. Colonel Sir Neil Campbell, who accompanied him to the island as British commissioner, gives the following life-like details:

Napoleon certainly regrets that he gave up the contest, and has almost declared to me that, had he known the spirit and power of Augereau's army, and that its exertions were only paralysed by the defection of that Marshal, he would have joined it, and carried the war into Italy. However, his ties of esteem towards all his Marshals appear to have diminished. A few days ago he described to me their respective good and bad qualities. St. Cyr and Masséna ranked highest in his list. He regretted that he had left his Marshals unemployed (for they were tired of war), and had not sought for younger chiefs among his other generals and colonels: this, he said, was his ruin. I have never seen a man in any situation of life with so much personal activity and restless perseverance. He appears to take so much pleasure in perpetual movement, and in seeing those who

¹ "Napoleon's Last Voyages" (edit. of 1906), pp. 88-90, 100.

² Rose, "Pitt and Napoleon: Essays and Letters," p. 176.

accompany him sink under atigue, as has been the case on several occasions when I have accompanied him. I do not think it possible for him to sit down to study, on any pursuits of retirement, as proclaimed by him to be his intention, so long as his state of health permits corporeal exercise. After being yesterday on foot in the heat of the sun, from 5 a.m. to 3 p.m., visiting the frigates and transports, and even going down to the hold among his horses, he rode on horseback for three hours, as he told me afterwards, *pour se défatiguer*! These details show that if opportunities for warfare upon a great scale and for important objects do not present themselves, he is likely to avail himself of any others, in order to indulge this passion from mere recklessness. His thoughts seem to dwell perpetually upon the operations of war.¹

Yet the activity of the Emperor found expression in many ways. He planned roads, vineyards, and new buildings, also a lazaretto in the harbour of Porto Ferrajo, alleging that vessels would come there for quarantine in preference to Leghorn, and so bring money to the island. On the contrary all neighbouring States refused to recognize the new institution and prohibited intercourse with Elba. This he ascribed to jealousy, but found it desirable to give way. He soon annexed the neighbouring islet, Pianosa, an act which caused some concern. The new taxes which he imposed provoked almost a rising; whereupon he ordered 100 of his Guards to live on his recalcitrant subjects until they paid in full.² On the other hand Baron Peyrusse declares that Elba now experienced

¹ Neil Campbell, "Journal," pp. 243, 244.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 246-249.

a time of wholly beneficent activity, and that all who saw Napoleon were charmed with his kindliness.¹ He was rightly indignant at the non-payment by Louis XVIII of the sum stipulated by the Allies at Fontainebleau, an act of meanness and folly ; for it gave Napoleon a good excuse for ending the Elba experiment. He cut down the pay of his officials and soldiers, and seemed greatly annoyed at having to take these steps. It must not be supposed, however, that he was ever reduced to severe straits. Peyrusse, who supervised the exchequer, shows clearly that Napoleon took away to France a large sum of money, leaving a little behind for the few troops who remained.² From those who paid visits to the Tuscan coast the Emperor inquired eagerly as to the state of public opinion in Italy and France ; and to Campbell on 16th September he said it was absurd for Louis XVIII to imitate the British Constitution, as there were not the materials in France for working it. He then declaimed against the territorial sacrifices demanded from France, especially those of the Netherlands and Luxemburg, which left her without defence on the north. These are Napoleon's words :

While Prussia, Holland, Austria, and Russia were aggrandised beyond all proportion on the Continent, and England in the East and West Indies, France had lost all, even to the pitiful island of St. Lucia.³ He spoke as a spectator, without

¹ Peyrusse, "Mémorial," p. 253. ² *Ibid.*, pp. 370, 371.

³ This was incorrect, for she regained nearly all her colonies except Mauritius.

any future hopes or present interest; for he had neither, again insisting on his own nonentity; but it showed utter ignorance of the French character and temper of the present time. Their chief failings were pride and the love of glory, and it was impossible for them to look forward with satisfaction and feelings of tranquility, as was stated to be the sincere wish of all the Allies, under such sacrifices. They were conquered only by a great superiority of numbers but not humiliated. The population of France had not suffered to the extent that might be supposed, for he always spared their lives, and exposed the Italians, and other foreigners. These observations gradually led him to speak of his own feats in war and the last campaign. He entered into the details of many operations, in which he had repulsed the enemy and gained advantages with numbers inferior beyond comparison, and then went on to abuse Marshal Marmont, to whose defection alone he ascribed his being obliged to give up the contest.¹

The tender side of the Emperor's nature showed itself to his mistress, the Polish countess, Walewska. The blond beauty had reluctantly given herself to him at Warsaw in 1807, and had borne him a son. Now, when Marie Louise so tamely forsook him, in obedience to the commands of her father and the enticements of Count Neipperg, Walewska came in triumph, bringing their son, the future Minister of Napoleon III. It having been rumoured that Marie Louise was about to arrive, the sailors received the newcomer in state. Napoleon chafed at her imprudence in accepting these honours—for he still hoped to attract Marie Louise to his side; but he speedily

¹ Neil Campbell, "Journal," pp. 300, 301.

succumbed to Walewska's charms.¹ The visit lasted only two days, but it became known, and not unnaturally increased the reluctance of Marie Louise to proceed to Elba. Thus the mistress triumphed. It was she, perhaps, almost as much as the Austrian Emperor, who completed the disunion of Napoleon and Marie Louise. Nothing, however, can excuse the withholding from the Emperor of his son, the King of Rome. Madame Mère and Pauline were at Elba and could have brought him up. Napoleon rightly felt indignant at his detention. Of Marie Louise herself he always spoke with warm consideration, even after her connection with Neipperg became notorious.

During the winter of 1814-15 Napoleon became more and more restless. On one occasion he recounted to Campbell in glowing terms the feats which the French performed under his leadership. These he ascribed to his speeches, still more to his emphatic delivery. Raising himself on tip-toe and stretching forth his right hand he shouted: "Déployez les aigles" —"Déployez les aigles." At Marengo, he said, during the rout he rallied his forty remaining horsemen by calling out: "Allons donc; en avant." Throughout the whole interview Campbell noticed a certain wildness in his air; and it is clear that, whatever he might say about his political death, he was very much alive. Jaunty hopefulness appeared in his treatment of a disconsolate guardsman at Elba. Meeting him early in 1815 the Emperor jovially remarked: "Well,

¹ P. Gruyer, "Napoléon, Roi de l'Île d'Elbe," pp. 147-157; N. Campbell, "Journal," p. 303.

grumbler, you're sick to death of this?" "No, Sire; but I'm not over fond of it." "You're wrong," came the reply, "you must take the weather as it comes." He gave him a Napoleon and went off jingling the money in his fob and humming the air:

Ça ne durera pas toujours,
Ça ne durera pas toujours.¹

The restless symptoms became very marked during the months of December and January, the very period when disputes at the Congress of Vienna nearly led to war between the Allies. A mysterious stranger arrives; and after his interview with Napoleon the excitement increases. Rumours fly about concerning plots to assassinate the Emperor, or to seize him and deport him to St. Helena. The Emperor is hard up for money, and reduces the pay of the Guards; yet he has the means to buy corn and clothing at the Italian ports.²

At last he slips away, and we know the result. The personality of the great man overbears all opposition in royalist Provence and conquers all hearts further north. The tricolour flies from steeple to steeple,

¹ Peyrusse, "Mémorial," p. 254. Owing to his restlessness, Campbell, during a visit to Florence, warned a French royalist, Hyde de Neuville, of the danger of his escape in order to join the malcontents of Italy or France. Campbell alone had no means of preventing his escape; and the blame afterwards showered on him was perhaps excessive; though certainly he was too often absent from Elba to keep any effective watch. A couple of French frigates were sent as a result of his warning.

² Peyrusse, pp. 262-268; Gruyer, pp. 176-179; "Nap. Corresp.," xxxi, 32, *et seq.*

and Napoleon, without firing a shot, enters the Tuileries.

The events of the Hundred Days do not concern us here. But it is of interest to recall Napoleon's later declarations that, after his first disputes with the Chamber of Deputies at Paris, he should have dissolved it. Many times he referred to this topic in terms which show the impossibility of his accepting constitutional rule. To take two of many instances. He said to Gourgaud: "Deliberative Assemblies are a terrible thing for a sovereign." And again: "I ought not to have formed the Chambers. I should have declared myself Dictator. But there was the hope that the Allies, seeing me summon the Chambers, would feel confidence in me. If I had been the conqueror, I should have laughed at the Chambers."¹ His remarks about the need of the Rhine frontier and Belgium for France also prove that, even after Waterloo, he was determined not to give up provinces which he deemed necessary for her security.²

¹ Gourgaud, "Journal," i, 82; ii, 323; so too i, 93, 103, 135, 149. Napoleon's irritation against the Liberals in the Chambers led to him losing valuable time on the morning after Ligny, declaiming against their opposition. It was this which made Grouchy too late in beginning the pursuit of the Prussians (Houssaye, "Waterloo," p. 223).

² Napoleon hoped by 1st October 1815 to have had 100,000 French troops ready, if peace lasted till then ("Nap. Corresp.," xxxi, 144). Another regret which haunted him at St. Helena was that, after Waterloo, he had acquiesced too soon in defeat. He declared that, even after his second abdication, when all others deemed his prospects hopeless, he might have put himself at the head of the troops south of the Loire and have

Holding these views, he could not possibly make good his promises of the spring of 1815 to adopt a peaceful policy. In March 1814 the European Powers had bound themselves by the Treaty of Chaumont to reduce France to her old territories as a guarantee of peace. Now, Napoleon had always stood for a greater France. Indeed, his nature bade him reject the boundaries accepted by the Bourbons. They might reign over a diminished realm. He would not do so. War with the Powers was therefore inevitable in 1815.

His abdication, his retirement to Rochefort, and surrender to Captain Maitland of H.M.S. *Bellerophon*, off that port, followed in quick succession. He had desired to make his way to the United States, but that was refused, because in March 1815 the Congress of the Powers at Vienna had unanimously declared him an outlaw; and they could not allow him to depart to a country from which he could easily return to Europe. To watch him in Elba was at least a possibility. To restrain his actions in the United States would have involved constant friction, perhaps war. Imagination falters at the thought of what would have happened had he come to America. His scintillating genius would have captured all hearts in a week. Probably he would have advised, and even headed, an expedition for the conquest of Canada; for in an interview with Major Vivian at Elba in the

battled for his son, Napoleon II. He uttered these remarkable words: "History, perhaps, will reproach me with going off the scene too easily" (Gourgaud, "Journal," ii, 322).

previous January he prophesied that Canada would soon fall to the United States;¹ and he had a tendency to fulfil his own prophecies. Fancy pictures him installed as President at Washington, in which position he doubtless would have imparted to the constitution the needful degree of fluidity.

At Rochefort there was another alternative—that he should settle down in England as a country gentleman. That, you remember, was implied in his request to the Prince Regent in the famous “Themistocles” letter. Its rejection has ever since been hotly censured. If we take the standpoint of sentiment, unmitigated censure must fall on the Liverpool Ministry for the decision respecting St. Helena. The standpoint of expediency is somewhat different. Perhaps we may personify those feelings and oppose them in a short dialogue:

Sentiment. Napoleon, the greatest man of the age, came as a guest, and you treated him as a prisoner.

Expediency. When he went on board the *Bellerophon* at Rochefort, he knew perfectly well that England had concurred in the declaration of the Congress of Vienna, that he was an outlaw.

Sent. Nevertheless, he had won the heart of France, and all the world sympathized with him. For your own credit you should have accorded to him generous hospitality.

Exp. A year earlier the Allies tried that plan at Elba, and it failed.

Sent. Yes: because the stipulated stipend was not paid.

¹ Rose, “Pitt and Napoleon: Essays and Letters,” p. 174.

Exp. True: but that was the fault of Louis XVIII and his Ministers alone.

Sent. Well! why could you not behave generously to him as your guest?

Exp. He was not a guest; in reality he was a prisoner. At Rochefort he was between the devil and the deep sea; and he and we knew it.

Sent. But he could have escaped on the *chasse-marée*, or else have fought his way out on the two French corvettes.

Exp. No: he and his companions carefully examined the chances of escape seawards, and decided that they were too risky. He had to surrender either to the French Royalists or to the British warships; and he chose the latter course.

Sent. As he came to you, you should have acted chivalrously. His life was done, and he wanted merely to settle down as a country gentleman in England.

Exp. No: he was only forty-six, and his conduct after Waterloo and down to the end of June showed his desire to fight to the very end.

Sent. In capturing him in that shabby way you covered yourself with disgrace.

Exp. We did not capture him. His coming on board was at his own discretion, and it was accompanied by no conditions binding for the future.

Sent. Better another war than your ungenerous resolve to shut him up in St. Helena. Generosity is on such an occasion the highest prudence.

Exp. Be just to your own people before you are generous to an enemy. After wars costing nearly £1,000,000,000 we had to prevent the recurrence of war at all costs.

Sent. But what cruelty to confine so great a man on that detestable islet!

Exp. His greatness and his restlessness were the source

of danger. We hoped that at St. Helena he could be detained with less personal restraint than elsewhere.

And so the discussion might go on, as it will go on, doubtless for ever, at the rate of about four books a year.

It is indeed difficult to think of Napoleon settling down quietly anywhere. His nature was too great, his activity too strenuous, not to chafe at his entire exclusion from political life. But the situation at St. Helena soon became most irksome. His wife and son were at Vienna. Few companions were allowed to come with him; and of these only Las Cases had intellectual gifts. Worst of all, the Governor who was finally sent out, Sir Hudson Lowe, was a somewhat narrow-minded and pedantic man, who had not the tact to mitigate a hard situation. In himself Lowe was kindly enough; there is conclusive evidence to that effect; but obviously he was oppressed by the weight of responsibility attaching to his office, which was not made easier by the presence of representatives of France, Russia, and Austria, to see that he guarded Napoleon effectively. Napoleon was a prisoner of all the Powers, not of England alone; and those representatives were there to testify to the fact.

The expression of Lowe's face was intelligent and kindly; but the features were thin, and the compressed lips bespoke a firm will and a quick temper. The eyes were keen and restless. In fact, the countenance was that of a Cassius. Moreover, he had commanded a battalion of Corsican Royalists, itself a

cause of offence to Napoleon, who therefore came with unfavourable impressions to their first interview. He afterwards said to Admiral Malcolm: "He (Lowe) has not the character of an Englishman. He is a Prussian soldier. He is clever and cunning. He writes well, and will make good statements to the Government. His manners are so displeasing to me that if he were to come to tell me that a frigate was ready to take me to France, and I was at liberty to go where I pleased, he could not give me pleasure." Thereupon Malcolm spoke up in defence of Lowe, and mentioned some of his civilities to the Longwood household. To this Napoleon replied: "He cannot please me. Call it *enfantillage*, or what you will—so it is; I can see that he is no general; indeed he never commanded anything but Corsican deserters.¹

This personal antipathy complicated a situation which must in any case have been difficult. The British Government, with more logicity than tact, refused to accord to Napoleon the title of Emperor. True it had denied to him that title; but after his fall generosity demanded that this punctilio should cease. Such, however, was not the decision of the Liverpool Ministry; and the instructions of Earl Bathurst, Secretary at War and for the Colonies, compelled Lowe to refuse it to the illustrious exile. Perhaps a man of higher connections and more tact than Lowe would quietly have ignored the order. At any rate he would not have withheld from Napoleon a book merely because it was addressed to the Emperor, or

¹ Lady Malcolm, "A Diary of St. Helena," pp. 37-39.

have dissuaded the officers of the 20th Regiment from accepting books presented by the Emperor with that title inscribed. Such actions bespeak a pedantic nature; but we must remember that in so responsible a position a man's nerves are apt to wear thin in the tropics. Malcolm afterwards pointed out to Napoleon that Lowe's temper was too quick to be compatible with cunning. On the whole the Governor restrained his feelings fairly well during the few and trying interviews with the great exile.

The chief quarrel between Napoleon and Sir Hudson Lowe was due to an act of Mme. Bertrand. She had sent a sealed letter to the Marquis de Montchenu, the French commissioner at St. Helena. This was against the rules, as Lowe pointed out to General Bertrand. He in his turn fired up and sent a violent answer, which drew on him an official rebuke. It is a signal instance of Lowe's tactlessness that, in company with Admiral Malcolm, he called on Napoleon to complain of Bertrand's expressions. The complaint, though made in guarded and courteous terms, at once kindled Napoleon's anger; he accused Lowe of treating Bertrand like a corporal, of doing his duty like a sentry, and of worrying all of them with restrictions and vexations as if they were Botany Bay convicts. Malcolm, generally in favour with Napoleon, tried to intervene, but the tide of wrath flowed on. Lowe kept his temper well under control; but he who had come to make a mild remonstrance, was now the culprit. At last he told Napoleon that he pitied him for so misunderstanding his (Lowe's) character, and

for the rudeness of his manners, and wished him good morning. Admiral Malcolm also retired.¹ Had Lowe been a man of ordinary discernment, he would have seen the folly of going in person to request Napoleon to put a check on Bertrand. A letter would have caused far less offence, especially as the Emperor had taken a personal dislike to Lowe. This is a type of the disputes that went on at St. Helena. Arising out of petty causes, they were embittered by liverishness or *ennui*. Gourgaud admits that the Governor sought to lessen the discomforts of their lots. He gave to Las Cases a cordial reception, and put his library at the disposal of the Longwood household; but Napoleon himself intervened to stop all intercourse of this kind.² Whether from dislike of Lowe or from policy, he kept his followers entirely aloof and in his own society. To their credit they complied. It is a signal proof of his magnetic power that he swayed their being as absolutely as at the Tuileries.

On one occasion Napoleon's restlessness got the better of his prudence. It was during a ride with Gourgaud, early in January 1816. He called out that Captain Poppleton, their escort, was too near, and charged Bertrand to order him further back. Then, on getting out of sight of the British officer, he exclaimed: "Gourgaud, gallop." They galloped wildly and gave Poppleton the slip. Coming to a house in-

¹ Lady Malcolm, "Diary," pp. 55-65, which corrects Gourgaud, "Journal," i, 237. Gourgaud was in bed at the time (18th August 1816).

² Gourgaud, "Journal," i, 167, 168, 180, 184, 247.

habited by Mrs. Pritchard, they dismounted and found a place commanding a view of two valleys leading to the sea. Napoleon told Gourgaud to give the gardener and the slave in the garden a Napoleon apiece; and in the evening the two returned to Longwood, the Emperor declaring himself delighted by the ride, and resolved to do the same again. As Malcolm rightly said, it was only a freak of fancy, a proof that Napoleon's high spirits were far from spent. Nevertheless, it must have alarmed the officials, who kept closer watch for the future.

In the summer of 1816 the British Government heard rumours of a rescue expedition preparing at Baltimore at the instance of a French officer named Fournier; and this probably accounts for the stricter regulations respecting the sentries near Longwood which were enforced by Lowe in the month of October following.¹ This change completed the annoyance of Napoleon, who thereafter remained almost entirely at Longwood. Thenceforth his exile became very irksome; but, as he remarked to Gourgaud, by staying indoors he preserved his dignity, and perhaps in a year he would be dead. In 1817 the British Government received news of the preparation of two expeditions for rescuing Napoleon, the former at Philadelphia in July consisting of about 1,000 men; the latter, of November 1817, of small, swift sailing-vessels, or possibly steamers. Nothing came of these

¹ Rose, "Napoleonic Studies," pp. 327, 328. For the report of a plan of rescue by a steamboat from Pernambuco see Gourgaud, 'Journal,' ii, 454.

enterprises, except that the reports of them made the British Government and Lowe more suspicious.

The time of exile was unspeakably dreary. Politics, administration, war, were the breath of life to Napoleon; he who had made and unmade kings now regulated the affairs of one household.¹ That powerful brain, "which never found enough materials on which to work,"² now surveyed the jealousies of four very mediocre Frenchmen. Ordinary men could have lived there without much discomfort; but ordinary men have tastes or hobbies which brighten the evening of life. Art, music, literature, or, on a lower plane, sport, the collection of curios, farming, gardening, the care of animals—these open out a placid vista; and he who sees it not fares ill. For him rest is mental friction, and retirement mere boredom. Now, to Napoleon, fighting through the jungle was the chief joy of life. He confessed to Jomini that he loved the excitement of battles; and, after a dozen campaigns, a man such as he rarely settles down to Bœotian calm. His spirit ranged restlessly over France and Europe. He cared neither for art nor music, nor the trifling pursuits of the countryside. Discussions with Gourgaud on Waterloo, *dictées* to Montholon on the events of his career, studies on the art of war or more general topics, occupied much of his time; but these subjects

¹ "His house now is very good, having been very much added to, as there are about 46 rooms in it" (Captain Ross, in "Napoleon and his Fellow Travellers," p. 63, by Mr. Clement Shorter).

² Méneval, "Méms.," i, 405.

often aroused poignant regrets. On the whole, then, reading of the French classics became his chief recreation. As we have seen, he admired *les genres tranchés*. Voltaire's tragedy, "Zaïre," was his favourite, as was the case in his youth. He mentioned it with ecstasy in the "Discours de Lyon" (1791); and at Longwood he read it aloud so frequently as to need often to pause and exclaim: "Mme. de Montholon, vous dormez."¹ Finally she and Gourgaud resorted to the device of hiding the book as the only means of thwarting this importunate preference.

Fixity of purpose is no less remarkable in Napoleon's tastes than in his resolves. True, both the sentimentalism and the levelling tendencies of Rousseau now repelled him; and he seems at St. Helena never to have read any of his works, except "La Nouvelle Héloïse." The charm of style and of expression pleased him greatly, but he objected to the excess of the power of love there depicted, apparently forgetting the frenzy of his first passion for Joséphine. "Love," said the Emperor, "ought to be a pleasure and not a torment." According to Las Cases, he finally pronounced that "love must be the occupation of the idle man, the temporary distraction of the warrior, and the chief peril of the sovereign."²

This conclusion may be that of Las Cases; for it is

¹ Lord Holland, "Foreign Reminiscences," p. 305.

² Las Cases, "Mémorial," ii, 24. The occasion is different from that described, very curtly, by Gourgaud ("Journal," ii, 66). The two accounts are of interest as showing the inability of Gourgaud, and the ability of Las Cases, to handle and adorn literary themes.

stated with an art to which Napoleon rarely had recourse; but this and similar pronouncements enable us to realize his standpoint with regard to literature. Style, apart from the qualities of force and directness, appealed little to him; but he took pleasure in branching off from strictly literary topics to a discussion of the human emotions and interests involved in the plot. There is a spice of truth in Goethe's cruel phrase, that Napoleon had studied the tragic drama "with the attention of a criminal judge"; but even Goethe admitted that his criticisms were keen and original, and we could wish that we had more of them. A survey of the chief works of the French stage by the exile would be of priceless interest. Unfortunately we have only fragmentary criticisms, chiefly from the pen of Las Cases, who often dressed them up in the fashion most acceptable to Frenchmen. For instance, though "Zaïre" is known to have been Napoleon's favourite drama, Las Cases does not once mention it. On the other hand, he describes Napoleon's rapture at the noble qualities of Corneille and Racine; he also descants on his depreciation of Voltaire as full of bombast and tinsel, always false, ignorant alike of men and affairs, and of the truth and grandeur of the passions.¹ It is impossible to reconcile this with the Emperor's fondness for "Zaïre," the "Othello" of the French drama. Elsewhere Las Cases describes Napoleon's *critiques* on Voltaire's "Mahomet" and "Brutus," and mentions the surprise of the Longwood household when he pronounced the

¹ Las Cases, "Mémorial," ii, 304.

recognition scene in the "Oedipe" as the finest in the French theatre. In the Greek drama he admired most of all the "Agamemnon" of Aeschylus, and next the "Œdipus Rex" of Sophocles.¹ The choice bespeaks his love for the grand and terrible.

The extent and variety of Napoleon's writings at St. Helena are very remarkable, and sufficiently disprove the assertion that his mind had decayed by the year 1815. His political judgement and tact had declined; not the mental faculties. I can notice only one or two of the St. Helena writings. One of the most curious of them is a critique on Book II of Vergil's "Aeneid." Napoleon remarks that, fine as is the style, the facts are far otherwise; and he proceeds to criticise them in the most matter-of-fact way. The episode of the wooden horse offends him. Why should the Trojans send a vessel to see whether the Greeks really had sailed away, when they could see the roadstead from the towers of Troy? How could so clever a man as Ulysses, together with other chiefs, shut themselves up in a wooden horse, thus placing themselves entirely at the mercy of their foes in Troy? And even if the horse held only a hundred warriors, its weight would be so great as to prevent it being dragged from the sea-shore, over two rivers, and a passage in the walls, in one day. Then, again (says Napoleon), the episode of Sinon is absurd, though artfully described, and is not relieved by the beautiful incident of Laocoon. Further, the horse cannot have been opened until 1 a.m., and the de-

¹ Las Cases, "Mémorial," iii, 102 391; vii, 147.

struction of Troy takes place before sunrise, *i.e.*, in three or four hours, which is monstrous; for Troy could not be destroyed in less than a fortnight.¹ And so on. The whole critique is excellent reading, as an application of modern tactics and geometrical reasoning to an epic founded on legend. Incidentally, it affords additional proof of what I have termed the hardening of Napoleon's brain. In youth he gave free rein to sentiment and imagination. But intense absorption in public affairs had stunted these gifts; so that even in the perusal of novels the chief point of interest is the expenditure of the hero, and how he manages to live on so much a year. Napoleon delights when he can convict the novelist of unreasonable optimism on money affairs.

Another proof of this "bronzing over" of the heart (to use his own expressive phrase) appears in a little essay on suicide written in August 1820. You remember his sentimental effusion on that subject, written in 1787 (see Lecture I), in which he lets his brooding melancholy draw him on to thoughts of self-destruction. Poor, solitary, an alien at heart to France, and yet despising the Corsicans for their subjection to France, he dallies with the notion of self-murder, and yet breaks away from it, we know not why. Now, thirty years later, he examines the topic coolly, critically, as appears in the following sentences: "... Has a man the right to kill himself? Yes, if his death does no harm to anyone, and his life is an evil for himself. When is life an evil for man? When it

¹ "Nap. Corresp.," xxxi, 491.

offers him only sufferings and pains. But, as sufferings and pains are changing every moment, there is no moment in life when a man has the right to kill himself. The moment would only be at hand at the time of death, since then alone would it be proved that his life was only a tissue of evils and sufferings. . . ."¹ The essay probably belongs to a time previous to the first signs of cancer, which carried him off nine months later. But, even when the stabbing pains came fast, the illustrious sufferer never sought to quicken his end. At an earlier time he said to Gourgaud that suicide was the act of a coward;² and by his consistent courage and resolve to live out his life to the end he set his seal to the bravery which had battled through a hundred fights.

A subject in which his keen intellect worked with sympathetic insight was the future of Italy. His experience of the renewed energy of that people and the shrewd geographical instincts which nearly always guided him found expression in these remarkable statements: "Italy isolated in its natural limits, separated by the sea and by very high mountains from the rest of Europe, seems called to form a great and powerful nation." Then, after naming the sources of weakness of Italy and the difficulty of choosing any one site which satisfies every requisite of a capital, he sums up decisively in the words: "Thus, although Rome does not possess all the desirable characteristics, she is, undoubtedly, the capital which the

¹ "Nap. Corresp.," xxxi, 485.

² Gourgaud, "Journal," ii, 66.

Italians will one day choose."¹ This is the most remarkable prophecy of his life.

The time spent at St. Helena was by no means one of bodily privation. In accordance with the proposal of the Governor, Sir Hudson Lowe, the British Government granted the yearly sum of £10,000, not £8,000 as was at first suggested; and that sum sufficed to maintain the household in comfort, if not in luxury. Napoleon was never a *gourmand*; and in the lifelike and convincing notes left by Gourgaud there is not a word as to any deficiency of food or wine. Further, a recently published letter of Lowe to the purveyor, Ibbetson, shows the extreme care taken by both of them to provide a good *menu* at Longwood.² In the productions of Las Cases, O'Meara, and Montholon, written with the purpose of arousing a Bonapartist feeling in Europe, much stress is laid on actual privations; but their statements are false. The discomforts were of a mental order.

The world still hangs with intense interest on the details of the exile at St. Helena; for greatness reduced to narrow limits is a moving spectacle; and the tragedy at times is chequered by almost comic interludes, especially when the disputes between Mesdames Bertrand and Montholon, or Gourgaud and Las Cases become acute. The career of Napoleon,

¹ "Nap. Corresp.," xxix, 75, 77.

² See the article by Mr. A. M. Broadley in the "Century Magazine" for April 1912. It seems certain that the restraints put on Napoleon were less rigorous than those which he inflicted on the Pope in 1811-13.

formerly so boundless as almost to defy presentment, now becomes intensely human. Perhaps the quarrels amused him. Certainly they broke the monotony of life at Longwood in a way not wholly disagreeable to that wearied group. In any case the scenes were inevitable. All the jealousies, which make a Court a veritable cockpit, were there pent up in one or two houses, and become food for laughter, sometimes for tears.

Naturally enough, the two ladies are the cause of the first rounds. Mme. Bertrand, wife of the Grand Marshal, was daughter of an Irish general, Dillon by name, who perished in the Revolution. She was also in part of Creole extraction; and her attractive, pleasure-loving character made her the centre of a gay set in Paris.¹ She had sought to prevent General Bertrand from coming, and for this purpose made a show of throwing herself overboard in Plymouth Sound. During the voyage she oscillated sharply between deep dejection and shrill complaints. Neither mood made much impression on Napoleon, who regarded these occasions as natural to her, and as calling for the exercise of conjugal authority. Bertrand did not play the man enough to please Napoleon. He was a melancholy-looking man, but a kind husband and father, inclined to humour his wife. At St. Helena he defended her occasional visits to Jamestown for the mild dissipation of shopping, even when they involved absence from the Emperor's dinner-table. This annoyed Napoleon, who declared that his house

¹ Lady Malcolm, "A Diary of St. Helena" (1899), p. 18.

was not to be treated like an inn, and that the Bertrands must either come always or not at all. At this and similar remarks they took offence and for a time absented themselves.¹ Bertrand complained bitterly to Gourgaud of Napoleon's treatment of them, adding that at Elba they found out his egotism. He on his side disliked Mme. Bertrand's wayward whims and moods, unredeemed by any appreciable gifts of intellect. Hence, though there were times when he showed them favour and benignity, the thought of past friction never quite vanished. On one occasion they remarked to Gourgaud that the Emperor's selfishness was the cause of his lack of friends, indeed, of his exile.²

The quarrels with the Bertrands gave to the Montholons the chance of asserting themselves with effect. Montholon was inferior to Bertrand in military rank, but he excelled him in social and mental gifts. His wife also surpassed Mme. Bertrand in tact and culture. Both of them were assiduous courtiers; and Montholon will always be remembered for his devotion in spreading the Napoleonic cult in France. At St. Helena he did not always please his master. On the plea that ghosts (that is, possible murderers) stole around Longwood at night, he requested the British sentries to come in nearer to guard the house. Gourgaud, waking up perchance, thought he heard a ghost. He arose quickly, looked out of the window and discovered a sentry. He went to the door and found another there. The story, whether true or not, is too

¹ Gourgaud, "Journal," i, 109, 152.

² *Ibid.*, i, 223.

good not to be told to the Emperor, who fires up against Montholon. "He must have a base soul (says Napoleon) to desire to become our gaoler. If this goes on, there will be sentries in my bedroom. Why pretend that there is danger? If there is, one of the French officers will lie at the door; but for God's sake don't defend me by British sentries." Montholon then loses his temper, and there is a scene, which Napoleon ends by telling him to be off and leave him quiet.

The Montholons are not always at peace. On one occasion they fall out owing to Montholon's chastisement of their little girl. The mother fires up, calls him an executioner, and rushes to lay her complaint before Napoleon. He jokes at her, and she returns baffled.¹ How singular that even a family quarrel must be referred to the Emperor!

For a brief space Gourgaud's star is in the ascendant, while that of the Montholons wanes. But Gourgaud has not the brains to keep in favour long. A glance at his physiognomy explains the man. The narrow, low forehead is almost that of a sparrow. He is puffed up with the recollection of saving Napoleon's life early in the campaign of 1814, and sometimes ventures to harp on this theme, even adding expressions of surprise that the Emperor prefers "that little Jesuit," Las Cases. This is too much for Napoleon, who on such occasions snubs Gourgaud, or else tells him he has a good heart but a very poor head; it is natural that a man of Las Cases' age should suit him

¹ Gourgaud, "Journal," ii, 66.

better. This Gourgaud cannot understand. In his view, Las Cases lacks both brains and knowledge; he is by nature an intriguer, and has come with Napoleon to St. Helena merely in order to write anecdotes about him. Worst of all, he has never fought a battle.¹ Sometimes Napoleon ends these discussions by giving Gourgaud ("Gorgotto" he playfully calls him) a friendly slap on the cheek or a pinch of the ear. Or else he concludes by saying that they are all equal, and ought to live as brothers. That is Napoleon at his best, and, as Bertrand reminds the pining, peevish youth, Napoleon always returns to a kindly mood.² A man who, even in exile, can be the cause of these frantic jealousies, and can allay them by an appeal to the better feelings of his followers, must have been a king of men.

The tedium of exile was not relieved by the mental gifts of these ill-assorted companions. With the exception of Las Cases, none of them had either intellectual or conversational powers. A Polish soldier, Piontowski by name, who had been at Elba and now came on to St. Helena as equerry, saw something of the Longwood circle, and was depressed by its dullness. The courtiers for their part thought him a spy, and Gourgaud claimed to have exposed his inaccurate account of himself.³ Nevertheless the following letter,

¹ Gourgaud, "Journal," i, 223, 316. Gourgaud (i, 530) ascribed "Warden's Letters" to Las Cases.

² *Ibid.*, i, 227, 234.

³ See Mr. G. L. de St. M. Watson's work, "A Polish Exile with Napoleon" (1912), for new and interesting material on Piontowski, and an exposure of the attacks of Gourgaud.

written by Piontowski at Paris to M. Aimé Martin on 22nd December 1828, deserves quotation. It is in reply to a request to publish his Memoirs. Piontowski refuses, in terms highly creditable to him:

What I could say is too odious; for his (Napoleon's) true position could not be described without entering into details too scandalous as to all the annoyances he had to undergo and which made him more impracticable than during the Empire. I should have to unveil the persons who formed his household at Longwood. Either I should be thought a calumniator, or a false idea would be formed of Napoleon and of his choice of men. Perhaps it would be believed that he was fallen so far as to be unable to find men of merit devoted enough to share his fate, and this would be a mistake in every respect. For it ought to be known that he counted surely on going to America to live as a private person, and there, after the storm, surround himself with true friends, of whom he could not at that time deprive the party of his son. The poison of the most refined flattery had spoilt him; and courtiers had become a kind of necessity in his position. He also needed men who belonged to a family with a distinguished name, which had influence in France. Montholon is an adopted son, and it is said, a natural son, of Semonville.¹ The Emperor therefore had to take him despite his personal nullity.

In writing frankly I should have to disclose in all its nudity the imperial family, which has done him more harm than all his enemies. . . . Having, then, little or nothing that is good to say, it is better to be silent: but, as I much count on rescuing from errors and unjust prepossessions a man of your excellent heart and brilliant intellect, to

¹ Napoleon said so (Las Cases, "Mémorial," iv. 255).

whom I am attached by friendship and gratitude, I will from time to time write to you notes which will depict for you that great man in his private life, and by traits which will be suited to reveal the man, his heart, his justice, his constant desire to do good, and to redress the wrongs which he had unwillingly committed; that all this mass of Memoirs, largely false, where one sees only the author of the work, his false judgments and the desire to make them interesting, so as to make the utmost possible out of them; often also [with] the design of harming others or at least of raising himself at their expense. I have never had any other motive than admiration, or any other ambition than that of serving him to the utmost. . . ."¹

In regard to the future, Napoleon's exile was by no means fruitless. There it was that he uttered words still treasured for their grandeur: "Our situation here may have its attractions. The Universe is looking at us. We remain the martyrs of an eternal cause. Millions of men weep for us; the Fatherland sighs; and Glory is in mourning. We struggle here against the oppression of the gods, and the longings of the nations are for us. My real sufferings are not here. If I considered only myself, perhaps I should have cause for gladness. Misfortune also is marked by heroism and glory. Adversity was wanting to my career. If I had died on the throne amidst the clouds of my own omnipotence, I should have remained a problem for many men. To-day, thanks to my misfortune, they can judge of me naked as I am."² Las Cases often

¹ From Mr. A. M. Broadley's MSS.

² Las Cases, "Mémorial," i, *ad fin.*

dresses up Napoleon's thoughts, concealing their strength under pretty arts. But those words ring true. Las Cases could not have expressed them with that superb incisiveness which is the charm of Napoleon's oratory. The appeal struck home. Napoleon the exile reigned more potently in the thoughts of men than he did when lord of 50,000,000 subjects. Like Mary Queen of Scots after her downfall, the vanquished conquered; for he now appealed to the emotions of pity and sympathy, which on the whole are of more lasting potency than fear.

The personality of Napoleon abounds in contradictions. Dowered with the passions of the south, he yet had the cool and calculating instincts characteristic of the northern peoples. By turns he was mild and stern, placable and unforgiving, generous but egotistical, far-seeing yet short-sighted. On every event and problem he concentrated a bewildering variety of powers, so that in every case we must ask what set of faculties led him to this and not that conclusion. Moreover, at the end of the inquiry we are baffled by the crowning paradox, that he, the greatest warrior and organizer of all time, left France weaker and his enemies stronger than before his appearance in the arena.

It is easier to explain his rise than his fall. Alike by genius and self-culture he inevitably became the leader of the Latin peoples, who then supremely needed a great organizer. He summed up in his own person much that was best in their past. Love of

order, a veritable passion for organization, and deep respect for the glories of Rome and the traditions of France, constituted him the champion of experience against Jacobinical innovators, who, as Catharine II wittily said, worked on the human skin as if it were parchment. Yet his training in France and Corsica, his espousal of the most practical tenets of the revolutionary creed, brought him abreast of the times; so that the union of past and present in his nature enabled him to end the Revolution and re-establish monarchy on a new and firmer basis. Having brought about a beneficent compromise in France, he proposed to call the other Latin peoples to a more active existence; and, but for the fateful blunder in Spain, he might have opened a startling chapter in European history. At that point, however, he parted company with fair play and justice; and the rest of his career was but a portentous display of activity misapplied. One nation after another found his sway intolerable; and his resolve to maintain it at all points was undoubtedly the main cause of his overthrow. The assertion that his fall was due to the jealousy of old dynasties for a *parvenu* is too superficial to call for notice. He had several opportunities for coming to a compromise with the Powers satisfactory both to France and himself; but he let them slip.

In the domain of fact all this is fairly clear. But from our standpoint, that of character, it is difficult to explain how a man of his mental acuteness lost those opportunities. At St. Helena he admitted that the failure to make peace during the Congress of

Châtillon (March 1814) was *une lourde sottise*. Yet along with that confession he expressed a fervent wish that he was once more in France; for with the levies of 1816, 1817, to hand he would have 100 regiments of infantry, and with them he would do much.¹ That the wish should come side by side with the confession argues a nature in which impulse bears sway over the judgement.

By degrees the passion for the grandiose had overmastered the calculating faculties which in early life generally held ambition in leash. After the campaigns of Austerlitz, Jena, and Friedland, he seems to have lost his mental balance. The same powers were there, even to excess, but the sound judgement which co-ordinated them no longer exercised a sovereign control. His work of orderly reconstruction during the Consulate was the outcome of statesmanlike qualities of the highest order; but most of his later enterprises betray a disordered imagination, a will on which reason has little hold, a persistence worthy of the heroic age, but useless in awakened Europe. The civic work will endure; the military quests came to naught even in his own day. Nevertheless as the elemental in man appeals to our love of romance, the personality of Napoleon will ever be a challenge to more strenuous activity, to greater concentration of purpose, to a defiance of the impossible. Mankind moves along lines far other than those which he finally laid down; but it will not cease to acclaim the hero who broke up the old world, enlarged the bounds of

¹ Gourgaud, "Journal," ii, 346.

activity, and set a high standard of achievement for future ages.

It is futile to attempt to sum up Napoleon in any one category. Attempts have been made to do so, but with indifferent success. Passing over the panegyric of the amiable Abbott, we may glance at four of them. Emerson, in an essay more acute than convincing, points out that Napoleon is an embodiment of the middle-class qualities then coming to the fore. But, half way through the thesis, he seems to feel that the great Corsican does not well fit into the niche of a Stock Exchange, and thereafter represents him as a villain of melodrama. More elaborate and artful, but scarcely more satisfactory, is Taine's embroidery on the theme that Napoleon is a revival of the Italian *condottiere*. Sorel, with wonderful ability and thoroughness, sought to exhibit him as the champion of a great France, the protagonist of her demand for the "natural boundaries." Even this sums up only one aspect of his statecraft, and in my judgement fails to account for his fall. M. Lévy has striven to depict his hero as an exemplary *bourgeois*, always intent on the preservation of peace, but driven to war by the successive provocations of all the Powers. The theme is at best very one-sided; and it often conflicts with the written and spoken statements of Napoleon himself. I think that he would have been the first to reject the portrait as a prosaic caricature.

Surely there is only one man of faculties sufficiently varied and forceful to challenge comparison with Napoleon. The figure of Julius Caesar dominates the

Roman world as that of the great Corsican overshadows the age of the French Revolution. Both men lived in cataclysmic periods, when the old order was passing away and new ideas called for recognition. In their several ways they succeeded in linking on the new to the old, and in perpetuating the principle of monarchy; for in both of them the longing for a wider and more intelligent polity was tempered by respect for all that bore the stamp of ancient use and sage tradition. Therefore, though innovators in youth, they became more and more conservative in manhood. Ambition doubtless played its part in the transformation of character which led up to autocracy. Wars of adventure further strengthened that trend; but each of them made good the claim of the foremost man to guide the drifting masses, and ably adapted imperial rule to the needs of the time. In some respects, I think, Caesar is a greater man than Napoleon. He began the serious part of life full late; yet both in war and statecraft he easily established an unquestioned supremacy which nothing but murder could end. He led the way both by developing new and trenchant principles of strategy, and by adapting the almost stereotyped polity of Rome to the needs of a fast-growing Empire. Further, his clemency and tact won the affection of the conquered peoples whom he brought under the Roman sway; and he left behind him a State both greater and stronger than before his accession to office. Finally, his unparalleled triumphs both at home and abroad neither blinded his vision nor hardened his temper. These

imperial powers were harmonized and humanized by an almost unfailing clemency; and, had he lived out his life, he would assuredly have continued to grace a stupendous career with the flowers of courtesy and kindness.

In this respect Napoleon suffers by comparison. There is something portentous, almost terrifying, about the Corsican. His temper is often more Ossianic than Caesarean. After gaining the imperial title, he adopted more and more a forceful policy, which alienated the vassal States. By "the Spanish blunder" of 1808 he lost that peninsula, and thereafter the North Germans were held down chiefly by fear. During the time of exile he saw the mistake. There is an undertone of self-reproach in his panegyric on Alexander the Great: "What I like in Alexander is, not his campaigns, which we cannot understand, but his political methods. At thirty-three years of age he leaves a well-established Empire, which his generals partition. He had the art of making himself beloved by the peoples he conquered."¹ Yes, that was the sign of the highest statesmanship. Napoleon felt that he lacked that supreme gift. Beyond the Pyrenees and the Rhine he had aroused more hatred than love.

Not that he was deficient in lovable qualities; far from it. He showed them to his family and his nearest friends. But his conception of statecraft became increasingly hard; and, while he scouted public opinion, his self-confidence grew until it obsessed his whole being. It is no paradox to assert that the

¹ Gourgaud, "Journal," ii, 435.

excess of his good fortune during the time of ripening manhood was his greatest misfortune. If both at Paris and in his early campaigns he had met with firm and able opposition, he might have eluded that curse of uninterrupted triumph—infatuation. Little by little he came under its spell, until, after the Austrian marriage, he steeled himself against counsel, and pushed every enterprise to the bitter end. Then came the blows of adversity; but they fell on a nature too hardened to profit by them. In a world which his energies had awakened to full consciousness such a career could not achieve lasting success. Providence uses such men while they serve its mysterious designs for the uplifting of the race. It casts them aside when their renovating work is accomplished. Napoleon saw not when that time had come. He struggled on towards the Indies, Cadiz and Moscow as though the new age of nationality had not dawned; and therefore he ended his days at St. Helena.

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